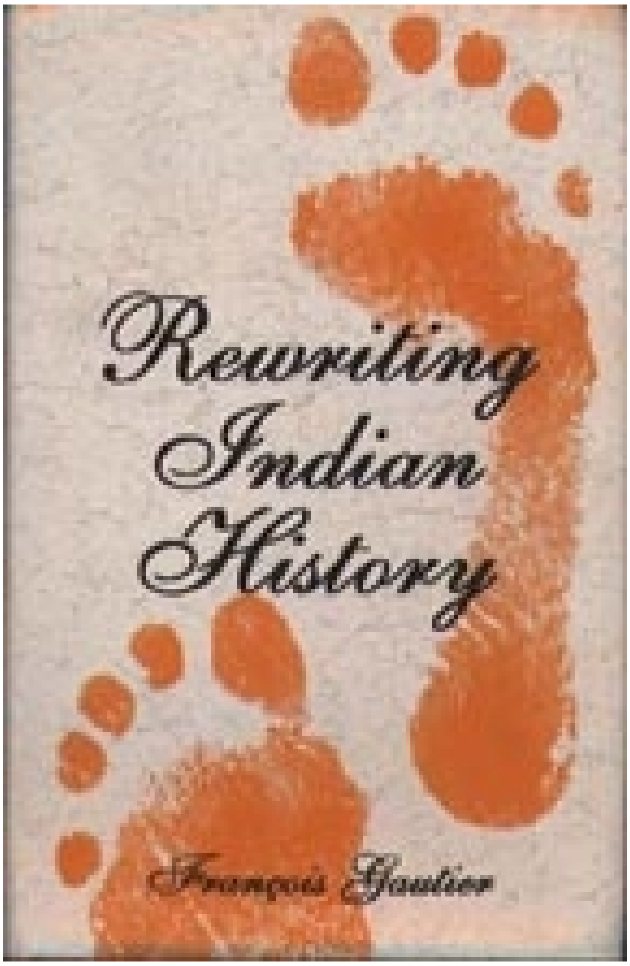
Rewriting Indian History

by Francois Gautier



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This book does not pretend to be a historical treaty, neither on India, nor on other civilisations; it only fleetingly uses events and people, in an attempt to go beyond the superficial views that have usually been held on India by many historians.

Foreword

Many historical books have been written about the greatness of India's past. One of these books is of course A.L. Basham's classic, "The Wonder that WAS India". While there is no doubt that Mr Basham's book is a scholarly treatise, beautifully written, which casts a sympathetic and benevolent look at what he feels WERE some of the wonders of a bygone India, my book differs totally from his for many reasons.

Firstly, he erroneously takes as final the biased theory of an Aryan invasion, subjugating the Good Harappan (Dravidian) civilisation, a theory which I propose to dismantle in the next chapter. Then, like the

majority of Western historians, he also post-dates most of the Vedic events - for then, their theory of, say Mohajan-daro being overrun by the Barbarian Aryans, would stand no more. Thirdly, although Mr Basham is full of praise for Indian (pre-Muslim) culture, art, language, sciences, village life, his views of Hinduism seem to be a little warped and reflect a strong Western bias. He appears to have absolutely no understanding of the greatness and importance of the Vedas, in which he sees only "a culture that bears a generic likeness to that of 'Beowulf', the earlier Icelandic sagas'...(nobody ever thought about that one)... 'and was somehow less advanced than that depicted in the Iliad"...! (page 34, Wonder That was India). To flout such an ignorance and contempt for India's culture and compare the visions of great sages who lived at least 5000 years ago, with the tales of the semi-barbarian Beowulf, is quite an achievement! Mr Basham also puts forward the eternal clichés propagated by Christian missionaries and "enlightened secularists" on the Indian caste system. "The Aryans anointed themselves the ruling class (= Brahmins and Kshatriyas), while the poor conquered Dravidians (Harappans), became the slaves, (= Vaishyas and Shudras)". Or: "As they settled among darker aboriginals, the Aryans seem to have laid greater stress than before on purity of blood - and thus class divisions hardened..." (36, Wonder that was India). Or else this monstrosity: "...In the Vedic period, a situation arose rather like that prevailing in South Africa today, with a dominant fair minority, striving to maintain its purity and its supremacy over a darker majority"... (138, Wonder). Poor India, being granted

the honour by Mr Basham, of being the founding father of racism! But it is thus that Mr Basham lays the ground for his later theories on what he calls 'Hindu imperialism'.

He also seems to miss completely the point, when he talks about Indian polity, or politics rather (always pre-Muslim of course). He sees Hindu kingdoms and republics as "a hopelessly divided nation, inviting thereby future conquest by Muslims and Europeans", a theory which I will attempt later to show as completely false and misguided. But more than that, he implies that Hindus were a cruel and warlike (except for the goodie-goodie Ashoka, a convenient hero) nation, even going as far as suggesting that India's sacred writings were responsible for that militant trait. In his chapter on Hindu militarism (page 123, Wonder), he goes on to say: "In several passages of the Mahabarata, notably in the famous Bhagavat Gita, the evil and cruelty of war are referred to, and it is suggested that the life of a soldier is sinful one. But such arguments are only put forward to be demolished by counter-arguments, most of which are based on the necessities of this dark age of the world and on the dangers of anarchy. Positive condemnations of war are rare in Indian literature..."! Not only is this a rather contemptuous view of the Gita, one of the great books of spiritual Revelation in world literature, but it completely misses the point that the Gita makes, which is that when one has to fight the evil forces of the world, one is doing one's dharma and one goes beyond the pious Christian prejudices about war.

But perhaps the greatest flaw of his book, after having dared to come down so heavily on Hindu militarism, after having devoted a whole chapter (Punishment page 118) on Hindu cruelty, after having labelled the Indian monarchical system of "quasi-feudalism" (page 95 Wonder), is that Mr Basham is surprisingly lenient towards the Muslim invasions and very quickly skims over that terrible period, which is, as we will see later, a genocide unparalleled in history. It should suffice to quote Mr Basham without any comments: "Under the rule of some of the Delhi sultans of the Middle Ages, there was persecution, and Brahmans were put to death for practising their devotions in public (!); BUT IN GENERAL THE MUSLIMS WERE REASONABLY TOLERANT (p. 481 Wonder)"...!!!! Or else: "..The Muslim invasions and the enforced contact with new ideas did not have the fertilising effect upon Hindu culture which might have been expected" (???). Another one: "Hinduism was already very conservative when the lieutenants of Mohammed of Ghor conquered the Ganga valley. In the Middle Ages, for every tolerant and progressive teacher, there must have been hundreds of orthodox Brahmans, who looked upon themselves as the preservers of the immemorial Aryan Dharma against the barbarians who overran the holy land of Bharatavarsa.."(Wonder, 481-482) But don't you know, Dear Mr Basham, that the Muslims were proud of their bloody record in India, of their war in the name of Allah, and that they left numerous chronicles of the amount of Hindus they killed, and the number of temples they razed to the ground?. You say you are an historian, Sir; then get your facts right. Are you then

implying, Mr Basham, that Hinduism, one of the most tolerant religions in the world, which historically not only accepted coexistence with all the world religions, but also recognised their divinity, pales in comparison with Islam, a creed, which whatever its greatness, killed tens, if not hundreds of millions, in the world, in the name of Allah and for which all non-Muslims are "Kafirs", infidels?

And last but not the least, Mr Basham credits the European invasion with the renaissance of India: "It was through the influence of Europe that revival came..." (Wonder 483). He also sanctifies the Christian missionary influence in India, which, though in a lesser degree than Islam, has been responsible for dividing this country and creating a small Hindu-hating westernised minority in India: "But early in the 19th century, the British evangelical conscience awakened to India and missions schools sprang-up in all the larger towns" (Wonder, 483). Does Mr Basham think then that the Muslims, the British and the missionaries were the greatest benefactors of India? He must be - as he is saying that it was the Western influence, through the British, which modernised Hinduism, influencing such movements as Ram Mohan Roy's Brahma Samaj. But he conveniently forgets that Hinduism has always been one of the most plastic religions in the world, from which sprang-up constantly hundreds of movements, all recognising the oneness of their source.

For this and for many other reasons, this book has not only nothing to do with Mr Basham's but you might well call it an antithesis.

Synopsis on inside of jacket

For most historians, whether Foreigners or Indians, India's greatness - if there is a Greatness at all - lies in its past, in the golden period of pre-Muslim conquests. Such for instance, is the theory of A.L. Basham's classic: 'the Wonder that was India'. But even that greatness, they often limit to a cultural, or else a spiritual grandeur. There also have been throughout the centuries, conscious attempts, particularly by Christian missionaries, and later by a few of India's own westernised elite, at propagating false theories on India's history, such as the famed Aryan invasion and its imposition on the "good" Dravidians of the hateful brahmanic caste system. Or the devious inference of a benevolent Muslim rule in India, which negates the immense Holocaust which the Arabs wrecked on the peninsula from the 7th century onwards. And most unfortunate, many of these theories have resulted in a wave -pre and post-independence- of denigration of the greatness which is Hinduism and a conscious attempt at stamping it out from Indian life today.

This book endeavours, not only to show that India was great in all respects, spiritually, socially, culturally and even politically, but also that this Greatness IS still there today, waiting to be manifested, waiting for India to awake to Her true destiny. However, India today is

facing grave dangers, both from within and without. And it is only after recovering her true soul, recouping her Dharma, that she will become united again, the Greater India that she was centuries ago, and fulfil Her destiny as the spiritual leader of the world. For as Sri Aurobindo, India's great yogi, philosopher and revolutionary said: "It is in India, the chosen land that Truth is preserved; in the soul of India it sleeps expectant on that soul's awakening, the soul of India leonine, luminous, locked in the closed petals of the ancient lotus of love, strength and wisdom, not in her weak, soiled, transient and miserable externals. India alone can build the future of mankind (India's Rebirth, p.88)

Chapter 1) : The Tainted Glass:A Look at Western Civilisation to understand the Vision we have of INDIA today

A civilisation is like the human soul: it has a childhood, where it struggles to learn; an adolescence where it discovers - sometimes painfully - the hard facts of life; an adulthood, where it enjoys the fruits of maturity; and an old age, which slowly leads to death and oblivion. In this manner, since the dawn of human history, civilisations have risen, reached the top where they gravitate for some time, achieving their enduring excellence -and then slowly began their descent towards extinction. Usually, old age for these civilisations meant that they fell prey to barbarians, because they had lost the vitality and the inner obedience to their particular genius, which they had possessed at the time of their peak and which had protected them. This has been a natural process and barbarians have played an important role in the evolution of humanity, for they made sure, in the most ruthless manner, that civilisations did not stagnate; because like a human being, a civilisation must die many times before it realises the fullness of its soul and attains divine perfection. There have been many such great civilisations which rose and fell throughout the ages: Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, Africa, China, Greece, or Rome. Human nature being what it is, most of these civilisations established their might by military conquest and thus imposed their order and their views upon others, a process which some have called civilisation, others colonisation.

The advent of Jesus Christ heralded the rise of the European-Western civilisation, whose forerunners were the Greek and Roman cultures. For long, Europe was only a disunited lot of barbarian tribes fighting each other. The Crusades signalled the earliest attempt at unity, although the French and the British, for instance, kept warring each other long after them. Some of these nations were great seafarers. Thus Spain and Portugal for instance, reached out to the far world and colonised huge chunks of territories in the Americas from the 14th century onwards. But it can be safely said that with the industrial revolution, European civilisation started reaching its maturity at the beginning of the 19th century and that a great civilisation, whose genius was consciousness in the material, developed henceforth. Simultaneously, of course, as all other civilisations had done before, Europe started expanding outwards and imposed its own civilisation on other cultures, which had lost their vitality and were open to conquest. England, particularly, because it mastered the seas, went farther, faster and acquired more territories than other European nations, such as France, who often had to settle for the crumbs. And certainly, Great Britain's prize possession, the jewel in its colonies, must have been India, whose mighty borders extended then from Afghanistan to Cape Comorin.

Western civilisation must be intimately associated with Christianity, even though Christianity took different forms over the ages : Protestantism, Lutheranism, Russian Orthodoxy... According to the Hindus, Jesus Christ was an "avatar", a direct

emanation from God. Christ was surely a great avatar of love (*).And Christianity certainly had a softening influence on the Western world, where, let's face it, barbarism was the order of the day for many centuries. In the Middle Ages for instance, Christianity was the only island of sanity in a world of rape, black plague, murders and chaos; and as the Brahmins did in India, it was the Christians who preserved the oral and written word for posterity. There have been many great saints in Christianity, men of wisdom, who strove for divine vision in austerity. Such were Saint François of Assisi's, who reached high spiritual experience. Saint Vincent de Paul, who practised true Christian charity. Or Saint Gregory, who attained authentic knowledge. Unfortunately, Christianity, got somehow politicised and fossilised under the influence of corrupt popes and has often become a magma of dogmas, rites, do's and don't.

Generally, because all Christians believed - like the Muslims - that only their God was the true one, The Christian colons sought to impose upon the people they conquered their own brand of religion - and they used the military authority of their armies to do so. It is true that this was done in good faith, that the " soldiers of Christ " thought that the civilisations they stumbled upon were barbarous, pagan and incomprehensible. True also that they sincerely believed that they brought upon these " savages " the virtues of western civilisation: medicine, education and spiritual salvation. But the harm done by Christian missionaries all over the earth will never be properly assessed. In South

America, the Spanish soldiers and priests annihilated, in the name of Jesus, an entire civilisation, one of the brightest ever, that of the Incas and the Aztecs. Everywhere the Christians went, they stamped mercilessly on cultures, eradicated centuries old ways of life, to replace them with totally inadequate systems, crude, Victorian, moralistic, which slowly killed the spontaneity of life of the people they conquered. They were thus able to radically alter civilisations, change their patterns of thinking. And three generations later the children of those who had been conquered, had forgotten their roots, adapted Christianity and often looked upon their conquerors as their benefactors. Yet a few years ago, the West was able to celebrate the anniversary of Columbus, discoverer of the "New World" with fanfare and pomp. But the New World was already quite old when it was discovered by the young Barbarians, much older in fact than the fledgling Western civilisation. And Columbus, however courageous and adventurous, was a ruthless man, whose discovery of the New World triggered an unparalleled rape in human history.

Yet, not only the West still deifies Columbus, but no one in the Third World has been capable to challenge coherently that undeserved status. The truth is that today, not only in the Western world, but also in the entire so-called developing world, we are constantly looking at things and events through a prism that has been fashioned by centuries of western thinking. and as long as we do not get rid of that tainted glass we will not understand rightly the world in general and India in

particular. For the stamp of Western civilisation will still take some time to be eradicated. By military conquest or moral assertiveness, the West imposed upon the world its ways of thinking; and it created enduring patterns, subtle disinformations and immutable grooves, which play like a record that goes on turning, long after its owner has attainded the age of decline. The barbarians who thought they had become " civilized ", are being devoured by other barbarians. But today, the economic might has replaced the military killing machine.

The First Disinformation on INDIA : Aryans VS Dravidians

When the early Christian missionaries arrived in India, they found it very hard to convert Hindus. Not only Hinduism had a broad, well-structured base, but it was also so multi-facet that it accepted in its fold creeds which sometimes ran contrary to its mainstream philosophy. How do you go about converting a religion which says that God takes as many shapes to manifest Himself as there are forms on this earth? The missionaries could not, as the Muslims had done, convert under threat of death; and they quickly realised the hopelessness of their task and soon turned towards more fertile ground: the Tribals and the Dalits. By financial incentive (and also by immense good work, because the unflagging spirit of missionaries can never be denied, particularly in the field of health and education -but is it not another clever way to attract innocent souls in its fold ?) and patience, the missionaries managed to make important inroads,

specially in the border states of East India, Goa and Kerala. This they achieved in great part by pitting the downtrodden tribals and Harijans against the "arrogant" Brahmins and Kshatryas. But there was a flaw in their policy: all belonged to the same Hindu fold and -even when converted- recognised its laws, particularly the reincarnation theory, which could make them Harijans in this life and Brahmins in the next. (Even today, this is visible in Velangani for instance, the " miraculous " Mecca of all Indian Christians, which practises, to the irritation of the priests, a blend of Hinduism and Christianity) So the missionaries, and particularly the Jesuits, who are great dialecticians, took-up a new historical theory which had already been floated around by a few western historians. "Once upon a time, they said, there was a great civilisation called Bharat, or Hindustan, where lived good-natured, peaceful, dark-skinned shepherds, called the Dravidians, adoring good natured pre-Vedic gods, such as Shiva. They had a remarkable civilisation going, witness the city of Mohenjo-Daro in Pakistani Sind, were educated, democratic and possessed a highly refined culture. But around 2000 B.C., they continued, the villains entered the scene: fair-skinned, ruthless and barbaric, nomadic Aryan tribes, adoring the haughty Indra, originating from somewhere in the Caucasus. These bad people colonised the entire peninsula and to forever mark their social boundaries, they devised the caste system, whereby they the priests and princes, ruled over the merchants and labourers"...And to drive the wedge even deeper, the Jesuits added: "but you the aborigines, the tribals, were there in India, before the

Aryans, even before the Dravidians. You are the original inhabitants of India, you are the true Indians"... Thus was born the great Aryan invasion theory, of two civilisations, that of the low caste Dravidians and the high caste Brahmins and Kshatryas, always pitted against each other, which has endured till today and has been used by all Western historians, and unfortunately by most Indian text-books too.

Sounds preposterous? Simplistic? Impossible ? Yet this theory not only helped the missionaries to play the Untouchables against the hated Brahmins, who let it be said, managed single-handedly to preserve orally Hindu culture and religion for five millenniums, it also suited the British, who found it an ideal channel to push forward their divide and rule policies. It served also well the Muslim invaders, who used it to convert Harijans (and they still capitalise on that theory today). It even suited Nazi racism with its theory of Aryan supremacy, even though they only borrowed the inverted Aryan cross from India and did not even take pains to read Hindu philosophy, which is one of the least racists and most tolerant creeds in the world.

Of all the Western historians who wrote historical treaties on India, Alain Danielou from France, is probably one of the most enlightened. Danielou had a great love for Hindu culture, which he felt is the backbone of Indian history and people - and we shall later quote extensively from his " Histoire de l'Inde ", which shows a real insight in post-vedic Indian history. Yet Danielou errs like other historians when dealing

with the Aryan invasion theory and enters in the same historical controversy: he attributes Vedic religion to the "Aryans", who he says, originated from Turkestan and the plains of Russia. " These original Aryans he remarks, first migrated to Iran and then moved on towards India, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, from 2800 BC onwards. They were intellectually and materially backwards and had no great artistic culture to boast-off. " And Danielou adds: 'the disaster that represents the aryan colonisation of India can be compared to the conquest of the Incas by the fanatical and illiterate Spanish adventurers and like in South America, the entire dravidian population was reduced to the status of slaves ".

Yet, a few voices have been raised against the Aryan theory, which let us emphasise, has no archaeological evidence: nowhere has there been found traces of a struggle between the Dravidians and the Aryans - and an immense clash is bound to have happened. Contrary to Danielou, the Dutch sociologist Konrad Elst, for instance, holds the theory that it is possible "that the Aryans were originally from North India and the Dravidians from the South, kept in a separate mould by the great Deccan plateau, which seems to have also sheltered the South from later Muslim invasions (Indigenous Indians, page 25)." Evidence for the view that Vedic culture and Harappan (Dravidian) culture were instances of one and the same civilisation, he declares, has been accumulating, while on the other hand, the traditional arguments for the Aryan invasion theory have been discarded after close

scrutiny. In fact, Mr Elst's great theory, which he calls "Urheimat", goes exactly opposite from Danielou's: Aryans were originally in India, Elst claims and they migrated outwards, to Iran for instance, where Zoroastrian religion and culture was a watered down version of Vedic religion and Sanskrit culture; then to Turkestan, and hence to Europe: "To the South, not to the East; rather than Indo-Iranians on their way from South Russia to Iran and partly to India, these may as well be the Hitites, Kassites or Mitanni, on their way FROM INDIA, via the Aral Lake area, to Anatolia, or Mesopotamia, where they show up in subsequent centuries".

Sri Aurobindo, too, India's greatest yogi, poet, philosopher- and surely its most ardent revolutionary- spoke against the Aryan theory: "We shall question many established philological myths,-the legend for instance of an Aryan invasion from the North, the artificial and inimical distinction of the Aryan and Dravidian which an erroneous philology has driven like a wedge into the unity of the homogeneous Indo-Afghan race... Like the majority of educated Indians, I has passively accepted without examination, the conclusion of European scholarship"(India's Rebirth, page 103)... Sri Aurobindo recalls that during his first stay in South India, he realised that although the racial division between Northern Aryan and Southern Dravidians is presumed to rest on a supposed difference between the physical types of Aryan and Dravidians and a more definite incompatibility between the Northern Sanskritic and the southern non-sanskritic

tongues, he was impressed by the general recurrence of northern or "Aryan" type in the Tamil race: "Wherever I turned, I seemed to recognise with a startling distinctness, not only among Brahmins but in all castes and classes, the old familiar faces, features, figures of my friends in Maharashtra, Gujerat, Hindustan, even though the familiarity was less widespread, of my own province Bengal. The impression I received was as if an army of all the tribes of the North had descended on the South and submerged any previous population that may have occupied it". (India's Rebirth 104). Sri Aurobindo also wonders if the so-called Aryan invasions were but incursions of small bands of a less civilised race who melted away in the original population. " How is it possible, he questions, that a handful of barbarians, entering a vast peninsula occupied by a civilised people, builders of great cities, extensive traders, not without mental and spiritual culture, could impose on them their own language, religion, ideas and manners ". Such a miracle, he maintains, would be just possible if the invaders possessed a very highly organised language, a greater force of creative mind and a more dynamic religious form and spirit. Lastly, he also shatters the myth of the difference of language to support the theory of meeting of races: "But here also my preconceived ideas were disturbed and confounded. For on examining the vocabulary of the Tamil language, in appearance so foreign to the Sanskrit form and character, I yet found myself continuously guided by words, or families of words supposed to be pure Tamil, in establishing new relations between Sanskrit and its

distant sister, Latin, and occasionally between the Greek and the Sanskrit. Sometimes the Tamil vocable not only suggested the connection but proved the missing link in a family of connected words. And it was through this Dravidian language that I came first to perceive what seems to me now the true law, origins and, as it were, the embryology of the Aryan tongues...The possibility suggests itself that they may even have been two diversions, or families derived from one lost primitive tongue".(India's 104) Recently, the decipherment of the Harappan script by Dr Jha, a scholar of West Bengal, has shown that this script is not proto-dravidian, as most linguists thought, but Sanskrit- related. Which means in effect that there never was any Aryan invasion, which " destroyed " the dravidian cities of Mohenjo-Daro or Harappa. It shows on the contrary that the Aryan influence went from East to West: from India to Iran; from Iran to Greece; from Greece to Europe, where it moulded its philosophy and culture.

Here goes Mr Basham's pet theory of an Aryan invasion, which constitutes the first piece of disinformation on India. But when will the world realise the wrongness of their historical theories on the beginnings of Indian civilisation? History would have then to be rewritten and the consequences of this new theory applied not only to Asia, but also to the entire history of the whole world. For if Vedic civilisation is indeed at least 8000 years old, (some, as the mathematician N.S. Rajaram say 10.000 year old), if it is a unified culture, then it means that it not only

influenced other civilisations in the neighbourhood, Iran, or even the Gulf, in pre-Muslim times, but also indirectly the whole planet, witness the slow migration of some Aryan tribe towards Europe, of which the wandering Gypsies emerging in Eastern Europe by the 14th century, may have been the descendants.

(*) There is some indication that Christ came to India for spiritual initiation and borrowed from Buddhism for his teachings. According to Alain Danielou, the French historian who wrote " Histoire de l'Inde ", Many sects which developed in the first century before Christ in Palestine, had a strong Hindu and Buddhist influence and a great number of legends surrounding the birth of Jesus Christ, are strangely similar to Buddhist and Krishnaites stories. He adds that the structures of the church resembles those of Chaitya Buddhism and that the early Christian asceticism seems to have been inspired by Jainism "

Chapter 2) : The Vedas

The Second Disinformation : The Vedas

The second piece of disinformation concerns the Vedic religion. Ah, the Vedas! So much misconception, so many prejudices, so much distortion have been spewed about this monument of a book, this unparalleled epic. Danielou for instance, maintains that the original Vedas " were an oral Dravidian tradition, which was reshaped by the Aryans and later put down in Sanskrit ". According to Danielou, the Mahabarata is the story of how the low caste Dravidians = the Pandavas, revolted against the high caste Aryans =the Kauravas, who had enslaved them during their conquest - and won, helped by the dark-skinned Krishna, a Dravidian of course. Danielou finds lineage between the Vedic religion and the Persian religion (Zarathustra), as well as the Greek Gods; the problem is that he seems to imply that the Vedic religion may have sprung from the Zoroastrian creed! He also puts down all Vedic symbols as purely physical signs: for instance Agni is the fire that should always burn in the house's altar. Finally, he sees in the Rig-Veda "only a remarkable document on the mode of life, society and history of the Aryans".(Histoire de l'Inde, page 62)

But Danielou must be the mildests of all critics. The real disinformation started again with the missionnaries, who saw in the Vedas "the root of the evil", the source of paganism and went systematically about belittling it. The Jesuits, in their dialectical cleverness, brought it down to a set of pagan offerings

without great importance. Henceforth, this theory was perpetuated by most Western historians, who not only stripped the Vedas of any spiritual value, but actually post-dated them to approximately 1500 to 1000 years B.C. It is very unfortunate that these theories have been taken-up blindly and without trying to ascertain their truth, by many Indian historians and sociologists such as Romila Tharpar. And even when more enlightened foreigners like Max Mueller, whose Sanskrit scholarship cannot be denied, took up the Vedas, they only saw "that it is full of childish, silly, even monstrous conceptions, that it is tedious, low, commonplace, that it represents human nature on a low level of selfishness and worldliness and that only here and there are a few rare sentiments that come from the depths of the soul' (Foundations of Indian Culture. 262)

If there ever was one who disagreed with the Western view, be it of Danielou, or Max Mueller on the Vedas, it was Sri Aurobindo : "I seek not science, not religion, not Theosophy, but Veda -the truth about Brahman, not only about His essentiality, but also about His manifestation, not a lamp on the way to the forest, but a light and a guide to joy and action in the world, the truth which is beyond opinion, the knowledge which all thought strives after -'yasmin vijnate sarvam vijnatam' (which being known, all is known). I believe that Veda be the foundation of the Sanatan Dharma; I believe it to be the concealed divinity within Hinduism, -but a veil has to be drawn aside, a curtain has to be lifted. I belive it to be knowable and discoverable. I believe the future of India

and the world depends on its discovery and on its application, not to the renunciation of life, but to life in the world and among men". (India's Rebirth, page 90) Sri Aurobindo contended that Europeans have seen in the Vedas "only the rude chants of an antique and pastoral race sung in honor of the forces of nature and succeeded in imposing them on the Indian intellect". But he insisted that a time must come "when the Indian mind will shake off the darkness that has fallen upon it, cease to think or hold opinions at second and third hand and reassert its right to judge and enquire in perfect freedom into the meaning of its own scriptures". He argued that the Veda remains the foundation of Indian culture: "the Veda was the beginning of our spiritual knowledge, the Veda will remain its end. The recovery of the perfect truth of the Veda is therefore not merely a desideratum for our modern intellectual curiosity, but a practical necessity for the future of the human race. For I firmly believe that the secret concealed in the Veda, when entirely discovered, will be found to formulate perfectly that knowledge and practice of divine life to which the march of humanity, after long wanderings in the satisfaction of the intellect and senses, must inevitably return." (India's rebirth, 94)

What is the Secret of the Vedas? First we have to discard the ridiculously early dates given by historians and bring it back to at least 4000 BC. Why did historians show such an eagerness in post-dating the Vedas and making of them just a mumble-jumble of pagan superstition? Because it would have destroyed

the West's idea of its own supremacy: primitive barbarism could not possibly have risen to such high conceptions so early, particularly when the Westerners have started our era after the birth of Christ and decreed that the world began on 23rd October 4004 B.C...! Secondly, the Vedic seers, who had attained the ultimate truth, had clothed their oral findings in symbols and images, so that only the initiated would understand the true meaning of their aphorisms. For the more ordinary souls, "those who were not yet twice born", it meant only an outer worship which was fit for their level of spiritual evolution. The Vedic rituals, has lost its profound meaning to us. Therefore, as Sri Aurobindo elucidates, when we read: "Sarama by the path of the Truth discovers the herds", the mind is stopped and baffled by an unfamiliar language. It has to be translated to us.. into a plainer and less figured thought: "Intuitions by the way of Truth arrive at the hidden illuminations". (India's rebirth, 109) Lacking the clues, we only see in the Vedas a series of meaningless mouthings about the herds or the Sun. Sri Aurobindo remarks that the Vedic rishis "may not have yoked the lighting to their chariots, nor weighed sun and star, nor materialized all the destructive forces of Nature to aid them in massacre and domination, but they had measured and fathomed all the heavens and earth within us, they had cast their plummet into the inconscient and the subconscient and the supraconscient; they had read the riddle of death and found the secret of immortality; they had sought for and discovered the One and known and worshipped

Him in the glories of His light and purity and wisdom and power". (India's rebirth, 116)

Ah, these are the two secrets of the Vedas, then, the reason why they have remained so obscure and lost their original meaning. Firstly, the Vedic rishis had realized that God is One, but He takes many faces in His manifestation; this is the very foundation of Hinduism. And Secondly, the Vedic rishis had gone down in their minds and their bodies all the way to the roots of Death, to that eternal question which haunts humanity since the beginning of times: why death? What is the purpose of living if one has alaways to die? Why the inevitable decay and oblivion? And there, in their own bodies, at the bottom rock of the Inconscient, they had discovered the secret of immortality, which Sri Aurobindo called later the Supramental and which he said was the next step in humanity's evolution... "Not some mysterious elixir of youth, but the point, the spring where All is One and death disappears in the face of the Supreme Knowledge and Ananda." (India's rebirth, 95) Is this then the work of a few uncivilized sheperds, who had colonized the poor Dravidians? No wonder the West cannot recognize the Vedas for what they are, the whole foundation of their moral domination would then collapse. All the subsequent scriptures of Hinduism derive from the Vedas, even though some of them lost sight of the original Vedic sense. The Vedas are the foundations of Indian culture; the greatest power of the Vedic teaching, that which made it the source of all later Indian philosophies, religions, systems of yoga, lay in its application to the

inner life of man. Man lives in the physical cosmos, subject to death and the falsehood of mortal existence. To rise beyond death, to become one of the immortals, he has to turn from the falsehood to the Truth; he has to turn onto the Light, to battle with and conquer the powers of Darkness. This he does by communion with the Divine Powers and their aid; the way to call down these aids was the secret of the vedic mystics. "The symbols of the outer sacrifice are given for this purpose in the manner of the Mysteries all over the world an inner meaning; they represent a calling of the Gods into the human being, a connecting sacrifice, an intimate interchange, a mutual aid, a communion".(Foundations of Indian Culture. p 145). Sri Aurobindo also emphasizes that the work that was done in this period became the firm bedrock of India's spirituality in later ages and from it "gush still the life-giving waters of perennial never failing inspiration".

The Third Disinformation : The Caste System

Even more than the Aryans-Dravidians divide and the Vedas, the caste system has been the most misunderstood, the most vilified subject of Hindu society at the hands of Western scholars and even today by "secular" Indians. But ultimately if one wants to understand the truth, the original purpose behind the caste system, one must go back to the Vedas. "Caste was originally an arrangement for the distribution of functions in society, just as much as class in Europe, but the principle on which this distribution was based was peculiar to India. A Brahmin was a Brahmin not by

mere birth, but because he discharged the duty of preserving the spiritual and intellectual elevation of the race, and he had to cultivate the spiritual temperament and acquire the spiritual training which alone would qualify him for the task. The Kshatryia was Kshatryia not merely because he was the son of warriors and princes, but because he discharged the duty of protecting the country and preserving the high courage and manhood of action, and he had to cultivate the princely temperament and acquire the strong and lofty Samurai training which alone fitted him for his duties. So it was for the Vaishya whose function was to amass wealth for the race and the Shudra who discharged the humbler duties of service without which the other castes could not perform their share of labour for the common, good". (Sri Aurobindo, in India's Rebirth, p 26). Many Indian sages have even gone even further than Sri Aurobindo, arguing that in the occult relation India had with the Universal Force, each one was born in the caste CORRESPONDING to his or her spiritual evolution. There are accidents, misfits, errors, they say, but the system seems to have worked pretty well untill modern times when it got perverted by the vagaries of materialism and western influence. Can one accept such a theory? Sri Aurobindo, while praising the original caste system, does not spare it in its later stages: "it is the nature of human institutions to degenerate; there is no doubt that the institution of caste degenerated. It ceased to be determined by spiritual qualifications which, once essential, have now come to be subordinate and even immaterial and is determined by the purely material tests of occupation and birth... By

this change it has set itself against the fundamental tendency of Hinduism which is to insist on the spiritual and subordinate the material and thus lost most of its meaning. the spirit of caste arrogance, exclusiveness and superiority came to dominate it instead of the spirit of duty, and the change weakened the nation and helped to reduce us to our present condition...(India's Rebirth, p 27). And the Barbarians came !

But finally, have the people who dismiss caste as an Aryan imposition on the Dravidians, or as an inhuman and nazi system, ever attempted to understand its original purpose and genius? Is it really worse than the huge class differences you can see nowadays in Europe ? And can you really exclude it today off-hand, when it still survives so much in the villages - and even in more educated circles, where one still marries in matching castes, with the help of an astrologer? Does the caste system need to be transformed, to recapture its old meaning and once more incarnate a spiritual hierarchy of beings? Or has it to be recast in a different mould, taking into account the parameters of modern Indian society? Or else, will it finally disappear altogether from India, because it has become totally irrelevant today ? At any rate, Hindus should not allow it to be exploited shamelessly against them, as it has been in the last two centuries, by missionnaries, "secular" historians, Muslims, and by pre and post-independance Indian politicians -each for their own purpose. Thus, once these three disinformations, that of the Aryans, the Vedas and the caste system,

have been set right, one can begin to understand in its proper perspective the Wonder that WAS India.

Chapter 3) : The Wonder that " was " India

As A.L. Basham did, most Europeans have often seen at best in India an exalted civilisation of " religious " and artistic achievements. But India's greatness encompassed ALL aspects of life, from the highest to the most material, from the most mundane to the supremely spiritualised. As Sri Aurobindo emphasises: "The tendency of the West is to live from below upward and from out inward... The inner existence is thus formed and governed by external powers. India's constant aim has been on the contrary, to find a basis of living in the higher spiritual truth and to live from the inner spirit outwards". (India's Rebirth, 109) The old Vedic seers said the same thing in a different form: "their divine foundation was above even while they stood below. Let its rays be settled deep within us."

The foundations of the Indian society were thus unique, because all the aspects of life were turned towards the spiritual. The original social system was divided in four "varnas", or four castes, which corresponded to each one's inner capacities. In turn the life of a man was separated in four ashramas. That of the student, the householder, the recluse and the yogi. The elders taught the student that "the true aim of life is to find your soul". The teaching was always on the guru-chelas principle, and the teacher being considered as a representative of God, he got profound respect and obedience from his pupils. Everything was taught to the students: art, literature, polity, the science of war, the development of the body -all this far away

from the cities, in an environment of nature, conducive to inner growth, which was ecological, long before it became imperative and fashionable.

Indian society of that time was neither dry nor ascetic: it satisfied the urges, desires and needs of its ordinary people, paricularly of the husband and wife - the beauty and comfort of Mohenjo-Daro is testimony to that fact. It taught them that perfection could be attained in all spheres of life, even in the art of physical love, where Indians excelled, as vouched so powerfully and artistically by Khajurao and the Kama-sutra.

And when man had satisfied his external being, when he had paid his debt to society and grown into wisdom, it was time to discover the spirit and roam the width and breadth of India, which at that period was covered by forests. In time he would become a yogi, young disciples would gather around him and he would begin imparting all the knowledge, worldly and inner, gathered in a lifetime -and the cycle would thus start again. That the great majority did not go beyond the first two stages is no matter; this is the very reason why Indian society provided the system of castes, so that each one fitted in the mould his inner development warranted. "It is on this firm and noble basis that Indian civilisation grew to maturity and became rich and splendid and unique, writes Sri Aurobindo. It lived with a noble, ample and vigorous order and freedom; it developed a great literature, sciences, arts, crafts, industries; it rose to the highest possible ideals of knowledge and culture, of arduous greatness and

heroism, of kindness, philanthropy and human sympathy and oneness. It laid the inspired basis of wonderful spiritual philosophies; it examined the secret of external nature and discovered and lived the boundless and miraculous truths of the inner being; it fathomed self and understood and possessed the world"... (Foundations of Indian Culture, p.116-117) How far we are from A.L. Basham's vision of a militant Hinduism and evil Aryans, however brilliant the social and artistic civilisation he describes! For not only did the Hindus (not the Indians, but the Hindus), demonstrate their greatness in all fields of life, social, artistic, spiritual, but they had also developed a wonderful political system.

a) The Genius of Indian Politics

Another of these great prejudices with which Indians had to battle for centuries, is that whatever the spiritual, cultural, artistic, even social greatness of India, it always was disunited, except under Ashoka and some of the Mughal emperors -just a bunch of barbarian rulers, constantly fighting themselves -and that it was thanks to the Mughals and the British, that India was finally politically united. This is doing again a grave injustice to India. The Vedic sages had devised a monarchical system, whereby the king was at the top, but could be constitutionally challenged. In fact, it even allowed for men's inclination to war, but made sure that it never went beyond a certain stage, for only professional armies fought and the majority of the population remained untouched. Indeed, at no time in

ancient India, were there great fratricidal wars, like those between the British and the French, or even the Protestants and the Catholics within France itself. Moreover, the system allowed for a great federalism: for instance, a long time after the Vedic fathers, the real power lay in the village panchayats. Sri Aurobindo refutes the charge (which Basham levels), that India has always shown an incompetence for any free and sound political organisation and has been constantly a divided nation. " There always was a strong democratic element in pre-Muslim India, which certainly showed a certain similarity with Western parliamentary forms, but these institutions were INDIAN ". The early Indian system was that of the clan, or tribal system, founded upon the equality of all members of the tribe. In the same way, the village community had its own assembly, the "visah", with only the king above this democratic body. The priests, who acted as the sacrifice makers and were poets, occultists and yogis, had no other occupation in life and their positions were thus not hereditary but depended on their inner abilities. And it was the same thing with warriors, merchants, or lower class people. "Even when these classes became hereditary, remarks Sri Aurobindo, from the king downwards to the Shudra, the predominance, say of the Brahmins, did not result in a theocracy, because the Brahmins in spite of their ever-increasing and finally predominant authority, did not and could not usurp in India the political power". (Foundations of Indian Culture p. 326). The Rishi had a peculiar place, he was the sage, born from any caste,

who was often counsellor to the King, of whom he was also the religious preceptor.

Later it seems that it was the Republican form of government which took over many parts of India. In some cases these "Republics" appear to have been governed by a democratic assembly and some came out of a revolution; in other cases, they seem to have had an oligarchic senate. But they enjoyed throughout India a solid reputation for the excellence of their civil administration and the redoubtable efficiency of their armies. It is to be noted that these Indian Republics existed long before the Greek ones, although the world credits the Greeks with having created democracy; but as usual History is recorded through the prism of the Western world and is very selective indeed. One should also add that none of these Indian republics developed an aggressive colonising spirit and that they were content to defend themselves and forge alliances amongst them. But after the invasion of Alexander's armies, India felt for the first time the need to unify its forces. Thus the monarchical system was raised-up again; but once more, there was no despotism as happened in Europe until the French revolution: the Indian king did enjoy supreme power, but he was first the representative and guardian of Dharma, the sacred law; his power was not personal and there were safeguards against abuses so that he could be removed. Furthermore, although the king was a Hindu, Hinduism was never the state religion, and each cult enjoyed its liberties. Thus could the Jews and the Parsis and the Jains and the Buddhists, and even the early

Christians (who abused that freedom), practised their faith in peace. Which religion in the world can boast of such tolerance ?

As in a human being, a nation has a soul, which is eternal; and if this soul, this idea-force, is strong enough, it will keep evolving new forms to reincarnate itself constantly. "And a people, maintains Sri Aurobindo, who learn consciously to think always in terms of Dharma, of the eternal truth behind man, and learn to look beyond transient appearances, such as the people of India, always survives " (Foundations of Indian Culture, p.334). And in truth, Indians always regarded life as a manifestation of Self and the master idea that governed life, culture and social ideals of India has been the seeking of man for his inner self - everything was organised around this single goal. Thus, Indian politics, although very complex, always allowed a communal freedom for self-determination. In the last stages of the pre-Muslim period, the summit of the political structure was occupied by three governing bodies: the King in his Ministerial Council, the Metropolitan Assembly and the General Assembly of the kingdom. The members of the Ministerial Council were drawn from all castes. Indeed the whole Indian system was founded upon a close participation of all the classes; even the Shudra had his share in the civic life. Thus the Council had a fixed number of Brahmin, Kshatrya, Vaishya and Shudra representatives, with the Vaishya having a greater preponderance. And in turn, each town, each village, had its own Metropolitan Civic Assembly allowing a great amount of autonomy. Even

the great Ashoka was defeated in his power tussle with his Council and he had practically to abdicate.

It is this system which allowed India to flower in an unprecedented way, to excel perhaps as no other nation had done before her, in all fields, be it literature, architecture, sculpture, or painting and develop great civilisations, one upon the other and one upon the other, each one more sumptuous, more grandiose, more glittering than the previous one.

b)The Greatest literature ?

Mr Basham feels that "much of Sanskrit literature is dry and monotonous, or can only be appreciated after a considerable effort of the imagination" (Wonder that Was India, page 401), which shows a total misunderstanding of the greatness of the genius of that " Mother of all languages ". Sri Aurobindo evidently disagrees with him: "the ancient and classical literature of the Sanskrit tongue shows both in quality and in body an abundance of excellence, in their potent originality and force and beauty, in their substance and art and structure, in grandeur and justice and charm of speech, and in the heightened width of the reach of their spirit which stands very evidently in the front rank among the world's great literatures." (Foundations of Indian Culture p. 255) Four masterpieces seem to embody India's genius in literature: the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata. As seen earlier, the Vedas represent "a creation of an early and intuitive and symbolic mentality" (Foundations of Indian Culture, p.260). It was only because the Vedic rishis

were careful to clothe their spiritual experiences in symbols, so that only the initiated would grasp them, that their meaning has escaped us, particularly after they got translated in the last two centuries. "The Veda is the WORD discovering truth and clothing in image and symbol, the mystic significance of life", wrote again Sri Aurobindo. (India's Rebirth, p.95)

As to the Upanishads, asserts the Sage from Pondichery, "they are the supreme work of the Indian mind, that of the highest self-expression of genius, its sublimest poetry, its greatest creation of the thought and word.. a large flood of spiritual revelation..." (Foundations of Indian Culture p.269). The Upanishads are Philosophy, Religion and Poetry blended together. They record high spiritual experiences, are a treaty of intuitive philosophy and show an extraordinary poetic rhythm. It is also a book of ecstasy: an ecstasy of luminous knowledge, of fulfilled experience, " a book to express the wonder and beauty of the rarest spiritual self-vision and the profoundest illumined truth of Self and God and the Universe ", writes Sri Aurobindo (Found. of Indian Culture, 269). The problem is that the translations do not render the beauty of the original text, because these masterpieces have been misunderstood by foreign translators, who only strive to bring out the intellectual meaning without grasping the soul contents of it and do not perceive the ecstasy of the seer "seeing" his experiences.

But without doubt, it is the Mahabarata and the Ramayana, which are dearest to all Indians, even

today. Both the Mahabarata and the Ramayana are epical, in the spirit as well as the purpose. The Mahabarata is on a vast scale, maybe unsurpassed even today, the epic of the soul and tells a story of the ethics of India of that time, its social, political and cultural life. It is, notes Sri Aurobindo, "the expression of the mind of a nation, it is the poem of itself written by a whole nation... A vast temple unfolding slowly its immense and complex idea from chamber to chamber" (Foundations of Indian Culture, p 287). More than that even, it is the HISTORY OF DHARMA, of deva against asura, the strife between divine and titanic forces. You find on one side, a civilisation founded on Dharma, and on the other, beings who are embodiments of asuric egoism and misuse of Dharma. It is cast in the mould of tales, legends, anecdotes, telling stories of philosophical, religious, social, spiritual values: " as in Indian architecture, there is the same power to embrace great spaces in a total view and the same tendency to fill them with an abundance of minute, effective, vivid and significant detail ". (Foundations of Indian Culture, p 288).

The Baghavd Gita must be the supreme work of spiritual revelation in the whole history of our human planet, for it is the most comprehensive, the most revealing, the highest in its intuitive reach. No religious book ever succeeded to say nearly everything that needs to be known on the mysteries of human life: why death, why life, why suffering? why fighting, why duty? Dharma, the supreme law, the duty to one's soul, the adherence to truth, the faithfulness to the one and only

divine reality which pertains all things in matter and spirit. " Such then is the divine Teacher of the Gita, the eternal Avatar, the Divine who has descended into human consciousness, the Lord seated within the heart of all beings, He who guides from behind the veil all our thought and action ". (Sri Aurobindo; Essays on the Gita, page 17)

The Ramayana's inner genius does not differ from the Mahabharata's, except by a greater simplicity of plan, a finer glow of poetry maybe. It seems to have been written by a single hand, as there is no deviation from story to story... But it is, remarks Sri Aurobindo, "like a vastness of vision, an even more winged-flight of epic in the conception and sustained richness of minute execution in the detail (289). For Indians, the Ramayana embodies the highest and most cherished ideals of manhood, beauty, courage, purity, gentleness. The subject is the same as in the Mahabharata: the struggle between the forces of light and darkness; but the setting is more imaginative, supernatural and there is an intensification of the characters in both their goodness and evil. As in the Mahabharata too, we are shown the ideal man with his virtues of courage, selflessness, virtue and spiritualised mind. The asuric forces have a near cosmic dimension of super-human egoism and near divine violence, as the chased angels of the Bible possessed after them. " The poet makes us conscious of the immense forces that are behind our life and sets his action in a magnificent epic scenery, the great imperial city, the mountains and the ocean, the forest and wilderness, described with such largesse

as to make us feel that the whole world were the scene of his poem and its subject the whole divine and titanic possibility of man, imagined in a few great or monstrous figures ". (Found of Indian Culture page 290)

Does India's literary genius end with the Ramayana? Not at all. It would take too long here to jot down all the great figures of Indian literature and this is not a literary treatise. But we may mention Kalidasa, whose poetry was imitated by all succeeding generations of poets, who tried to copy the perfect and harmoniously designed model of his poetry. The Puranas and the Tantras, " which contain in themselves, writes Sri Aurobindo, the highest spiritual and philosophical truths, while embodying them in forms that are able to carry something of them to the popular imagination and feeling by way of legend, tale, symbols, miracles and parables " (Found of Indian Culture P.312). The Vaishnava poetry, which sings the cry of the soul for God, as incarnated by the love stories of Radha and Krishna, which have struck forever Indian popular imagination, because they symbolise the nature in man seeking for the Divine soul through love. Valmiki, also moulded the Indian mind with his depiction of Rama and Sita, another classic of India's love couples and one that has survived through the myth of enduring worship, in the folklore of this country, along with the popular figures of Hanuman and Laksmanan. "His diction, remarks Sri Aurobindo, is shaped in the manner of the direct intuitive mind as earlier expressed in the Upanishads".

But Indian literature is not limited to Sanskrit or Pali. In Tamil, Tiruvalluvar, wrote the highest ever gnomic poetry, perfect in its geometry, plan and force of execution. In Hindi, Tulsidas, is a master of lyric intensity and the sublimity of epic imagination. In Marathi, Ramdas, poet, thinker, yogi, deals with the birth and awakening of a whole nation, with all the charm and the strength of a true bhakti. In Bengal, there is Kashiram, who retold in simple manner the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, accompanied by Tulsidas who did the same thing in Hindi and who managed to combine lyric intensity, romantic flight of imagination, while retaining the original sublimity of the story. One cannot end this short retrospective without mentioning Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, Mirabai...All these remarkable writers have often baffled the Western mind, which could never understand the greatness of Indian literature, forgetting that in India everything was centred around the spiritual.

c) Indian art: Turned towards the essential

"The highest business of Indian art has always been to describe something of the Self, of the soul, contrary to Western art, which either harps at the superficially beautiful or dwells at the vital-unconscious level." (Sri Aurobindo. Foundations of Indian Culture p.208) This is indeed the great difference between Indian art and other art forms. For the Indian artist first visualises in his inner being the truth of the element he wants to express and creates it in his intuitive mind, before externalising it. Stories of how Indian sculptors

of ancient times used to meditate for one year before starting on their particular work, are common. Not the idea of the intellect or mental imagination, but the essence, the emotion, the spirit. Thus, for the Indian artist, material forms, colour, line, design, are only physical means of expression, NOT his first preoccupation. So he will not attempt, as in Western art, which in its heydays continuously recreated scenes of Christ's life or that of saints, to reconstitute some scene of Buddha's life, but instead, he will endeavor to REVEAL the calm of Nirvana. And every accessory is an aid, a MEANS to do so. "for here spirit carries the form, while in western art, form carries whatever they think is spirit".(Foundations p.211)

In effect, Indian art, its architecture for instance, demands an inner eye to be appreciated, otherwise its truth will not reveal itself. Great temples in India are an architectural expression of an ancient spiritual culture. Its many varied forms express the manifestation of the infinite multiplicity which fills the oneness of India. And indeed even the Moslem architecture was taken up by India's creative genius and transformed into something completely Indian. Indian sculpture also springs from spiritual insight and it is unique by its total absence of ego. Very few of India's sculptures masterpieces are signed for instance; they are rather the work of a collective genius whose signature could be "INDIA". "Most ancient sculptures of India embody in visible form what the Upanishads threw out into inspired thought and the Mahabaratha and the Ramayana portrayed by the word in life", observes Sri Aurobindo

(Foundations, p.230). The Gods of Indian sculpture are cosmic beings, embodiments of some great spiritual power. And every movement, hands, eyes, posture, conveys an INNER meaning, as in the Natarajas for example. Sri Aurobindo admired particularly the Kalasanhara Shiva, about which he said: " it is supreme, not only by the majesty, power, calmly forceful controlled dignity and kinship of existence which the whole spirit and pose visibly incarnates...but much more by the concentrated divine passion of the spiritual overcoming of time and existence which the artist has succeeded in putting into eye and brow and mouth... (Foundations P.233)

Indian painting, has unfortunately been largely erased by time, as in the case of the Ajanta caves. It even went through an eclipse and was revived by the Mughal influence. But what remains of Indian paintings show the immensity of the work and the genius of it. The paintings that have mostly survived from ancient times are those of the Buddhist artists; but painting in India was certainly pre-Buddhist. Indeed in ancient India, there were six "limbs", six essential elements "sadanga" to a great painting: The first is "rupabheda", distinction of forms; the second is "pramana", arrangement of lines; the third is "bhava", emotion of aesthetic feelings; the fourth is "lavanya", seeking for beauty; the fifth is "sadrsya", truth of the form; and the sixth is varnikashanga", harmony of colours. Western art always flouts the first principle "rupabheda", the universal law of the right distinction of forms, for it constantly strays into intellectual or

fantasy extravagances which belong to the intermediate world of sheer fantasia. On the other hand in the Indian paintings. Sri Aurobindo remarks that : "the Indian artist sets out from the other end of the scale of values of experience which connect life and the spirit. The whole creative force here comes from a spiritual and psychic vision, the emphasis of the physical is secondary and always deliberately limited so as to give an overwhelmingly spiritual and psychic impression and everything is suppressed which does not serve this purpose". (Foundations, p.246). It is unfortunate that today most Indian painting imitates Western modern art, bare for a few exceptions. And it is hoped that Indian painters will soon come back to the essential, which is the vision of the inner eye, the transcription, not of the religious, but of the spiritual and the occult.

d) The Great Civilisations

It is upon this great and lasting foundations, cultural, artistic, social and political, that India, Mother India, Sanatana Dharma, produced many wonderful periods. We are not here to make an historical review of them; a few of their glorious names will suffice, for with them still rings the splendour and towering strength of the eternal spirit of the Vedic fathers...

The Kashi kingdom of Benares, which was founded upon the cult of Shiva and was the spiritual and cultural capital of India, was, we are told, a great show of refinement and beauty, and that at least ten centuries before Christ was born, according to conservative estimates. Remember that Gautama the Buddha

preached his first sermon in the suburbs of Benares at Sarnat. " Kashi, eulogises Alain Danielou, was a kind of Babylon, a sacred city , a centre of learning, of art and pleasures, the heart of Indian civilisation, whose origins were lost in prehistoric India and its kings ruled over a greater part of northern and even southern India ". We may also mention the Gandhara kingdom, which included Peshawar, parts of Afghanistan, Kashmir and was thus protecting India from invasions,as Sri Aurobindo points out: " the historic weakness of the Indian peninsula has always been until modern times its vulnerability through the North-western passes. This weakness did not exist as long as ancient India extended northward far beyond the Indus and the powerful kingdoms of Gandhara and Vahlika presented a firm bulwark against foreign invasion ". (Found. 373) But soon these kingdoms collapsed and Alexander's armies marched into India, the first foreign invasion of the country, if one discounts the Aryan theory. Henceforth, all the theoricians and politicians thought about the unifying of India and this heralded the coming of the first great Emperor: Chandra Gupta, who vanquished the remnants of Alexander's armies and assimilated some of the Greek civilisation's great traits. Thus started the mighty Mauryan empire, which represents the first effort at unifying India politically. A little of that time is known through the Arthashastra of Kautilya, or Chanakya, Minister of Chandragupta, who gives us glimpses of the conditions and state organisation of that time. Chandragupta, who was the founder of the Maurya dynasty, came from a low caste, liberated Punjab from the Greeks and managed to

conquer the whole of the Indian subcontinent except for the extreme South. The administrative set-up of Chandragupta was so efficient that later the Muslims and the English retained it, only bringing here and there a few superficial modifications. Chandragupta in true Indian tradition renounced the world during his last years and lived as an anchorite at the feet of the jain saint Bhadrabahu in Shravanabelagola, near Mysore. Historians, such as Alain Danielou, label Chanakya and Chandragupta's rule as Machiavellian: " It was, writes Danielou, a centralised despotism, resting on military power and disguised into a constitutional monarchy ". (Histoire de l'Inde p. 114) This again is a very westernised view of post-vedic India, which cannot conceive that Hindustan could have devised constitutional monarchy before the Europeans. And Sri Aurobindo obviously disagrees: " The history of this empire, its remarkable organisation, administration, public works, opulence, magnificent culture and the vigour, the brilliance, the splendid fruitfulness of life of the peninsula under its shelter, ranks among the greatest constructed and maintained by the genius of earth's great peoples. India has no reason, from this point of view, to be anything but proud of her ancient achievement in empire-building or to surrender to the hasty verdict that denies to her antique civilisation a strong practical genius or high political virtue (Found. 373)

In the South the Andhras were dominating from Cape Comorin to the doors of Bombay. Then came the Pallavas, who were certainly one of the most

remarkable dynasties of medieval India. The first Pallavas appeared near Kanchi in the 3rd century, but it is only with king Simhavishnu that they reached their peak. Simhavishnu conquered the Chera, the Cholas, the Pandya dynasties of the South and annexed Ceylon. It is to this period that belong the magnificent frescoes of Mahabalipuram which have survived until today. During the Pallavas' rule, great cities such as Kanchi flourished, busy ports like Mahabalipuram sprang-up, and arts blossomed under all its forms. So did the sanskrit language, which went through a great revival period and the dravidian architecture style of Southern India, famous for its mandapams, which has passed down, from generation to generation until today. The Bhakti movement,also developed in South India during the Pallavas and it gave a new orientation to Hinduism.

At the same time, the dynasty of the Vardhamana was establishing his might in the Centre of India. Founded by King Pushyabhuti, " who had acquired great spiritual powers by the practice of shivaite tantrism ", writes Jean Danielou, it reached its peak under king Harsha, who, starting with Bengal and Orissa, conquered what is today UP, Bihar, extending his empire northwards towards Nepal and Kashmir and southwards to the Narmada river. Jean danielou feels " that King Harsha symbolised all that was right in Hindu monarchy, wielding an absolute power, but each sphere of administration was enjoying a large autonomy and the villages were functioning like small republics ". The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang, another admirer of Harsha, writes that he was an untiring man, just and

courageous, constantly surveying all parts of his kingdom. India's influence was then at its highest, her culture and religions expanded all the way to Burma, Cambodia, Siam, Ceylon and in the other direction to the Mecca, where Shiva's black lingam was revered by Arabians. But In 57O AD, the Prophet Mohammed was born and by the year 632, a few years before the death of King Harsha, the Muslim invasions started overtaking India, wave after destructive wave.

Chapter 4) : Islam and the Muslim Invasions

a) An apology of Islam

Before going into the Muslim invasions in India, it would be worthwhile to cast a sympathetic look at Islam: why it sprang-up; how it immediately went out in the world with a missionary zeal, unsurpassed in the history of religions; its genius, its beauty, its relevance today; but also the limitations and drawbacks of the world's most militant faith. These are questions best answered by Muslims themselves, although the author does not necessarily agree with all the views expounded here.

Why Islam ? Islam was a cry against the tortured atmosphere of Christianity, an answer to its perpetual ethos of suffering and its propensity to nail its saviours on the cross. Christianity is the first enemy of Islam, although in a sense, both religions are complementary. Why did Europeans succeed in stopping the Arab onslaught, while at the same time Arabs managed to enter India again and again and again? (French King Charles Martel beat Arab armies in 732 in Poitiers, 300 kms away from Paris. If this battle has been lost, the whole of Europe, might have been Muslim today) Because the Kshatryia class had become weak. The warriors of India had become arrogant, degenerate in their clinging to power and the true spirit of the Kshatriyas had been lost for the centuries to come, except in a few Rajput, Sikh or Mahrattis, like Shivaji. But the Arabs were khsatriyas: they were fired by the zeal to do Allah's work, unafraid of death. They were a

young warrior class. But why this extraordinary ferocity of Arabs in India? This brutal zeal to conquer, this militancy to convert by the scimitar is " Jihad ", holy war. It is the giving of oneself to the expansion of the Infinite, Allah, the only one. There is also a beauty in that kind of violence. What is the genius of Islam ? Islam does not kill the soul of a country. It assimilates its culture, as it did in India; take the zero for instance, which was invented by Hindus: Arabs took it up, developed it and made of it a full-fledged mathematics system, which from India travelled all through the Arab empire and reached Europe, thanks to Arab colonisation. Or take the Advaita, which they blended with Islam and transformed into Sufism, probably the most enlightened, mystical branch of Islam. You know, each Muslim has a direct contact with his God, each one is a servant of god and there are no intermediaries like in Hinduism with its idols and gods. It is a religion of the individual, for the individual; each one can thus lead prayers and become in effect a mullah; thus there is no Brahmin class in Islam, no monasteries, no churches. And this is what makes it so popular in the 20th century, why so many Muslims and non-Muslims, disillusioned with western society and its evils are going back to the fundamentals of Islam.

What is the strength of Islam? Islam is a religion of force, it is in the Arab temperament, borne out of the hardship and beauty of the desert and its nomad life. Muslims are devout soldiers; their savagery is not gratuitous, it is the fire of Allah which burns in them. Not the meekness of the Buddhist, which opened India

to invasions; not the guiltiness of the Christians which has hampered all western civilisation, but the spirit of might. Why did Islam crush Hinduism so mercilessly ? Hindus adore images and stone Gods and it makes them the number one enemy of Islam. For did not the Prophet say: " thou shalt not worship stone idols "? Thus Arabs, when they invaded India, did not feel guilty when they killed Hindus; on the contrary, it was an obligation, a holy duty. Why the hardening of Islam today, the harping on returning to the shariat, which seems maladjusted to today's modern world ? It is the refusal by the Muslim world to be swallowed by the grey uniform, soul-killing materialism of the West. The unconscious fear of losing one's Muslim identity in the face of the onslaught of the modern, atheist world. Even the burqua is a returning to a fundamental that have baffled all religion: the mystery of the woman, its destabilising effects on men. Hindus themselves forbid women in certain temples; or consider them impure when they are menstruating; or even do not allow them to read the Veda. Why should Islam be judged on the Burqa issue? It may be something that shocks the West, but Islam is not the burqa alone ! And look at what happened in the West with the liberalisation of women: it led to the break-up of the family system and brought in a perverse sexuality. And finally, which is better: wearing a burqa while maintaining one's identity, or finishing as a servant in some western bourgeois home with no dignity left? Moreover, Muslims all over the world feel they are attacked from every corner, whether in Bosnia, Kashmir, Palestine, or Chechnya. And this leads to an entrenched paranoia.

What are the qualities of Islam today ? Charity first and foremost. Contrary to the Hindus, who although they are generous people individually, are not concerned by the welfare of their less fortunate brethren - witness the abject poverty in India - Islam cares for their own. It is enough for a Muslim to say " Salam u alli kum " anywhere in the world and be treated like a brother, fed, clothed and sometimes helped financially. They all belong to the Ouma, the great universal Muslim brotherhood. Also the pure of Islam do not smoke, do not take drugs, do not drink alcohol; and this also encourages Muslims leaders all over the world to reimpose the shariat in their countries. After all, if India imposes dry law in some of her states, nobody has anything to says. Islam does it in the name of Allah instead of that of N.T. Rama Rao! The motto of Islam ? You deal with your material life as if you're going to live eternally; and with your spiritual life as if you are going to die tomorrow ". The best of Islam today ? Without doubt the great mosque of Casablanca, recently completed, symbolises what is most luminous in Islam today and stands as an example of a Muslim nation which has (so far) managed to retain the positive qualities of Islam, while adapting itself to the western world. Each artisan has recreated the splendour of ancient Muslim handicrafts: sculpture, paintings, marble inlay... It's a people's work; every Moroccan has contributed money, however small an amount, for the finishing of the mosque; it is thus a collective work which embodies all the love of beauty inherent in Islam and its moderation. There, after having washed oneself, one can in pray in an atmosphere of peace. What Islam

borrowed from Hinduism ? Sufism of course, which adopted some of the beauty of Indu India. Mogol architecture, which retained the perfect symmetry of Muslim linear design, while achieving infinite humanity. Hindustan music, enchanting to the ear...But overall, above everything, Islam in India borrowed the Shakti concept of Hinduism. Look at the Islamic countries surrounding India today. They are all governed by women ! Is it not a proof that deep inside him, the Bangladeshi or the Pakistani (or the Sri Lankan for that matter), are still worshipers of the eternal shakti principle: " without her you do not manifest ". Is it not also proof that deep at heart they are still Indians, Indus? About Indian Muslims They can never really be integrated to India, because the philosophy of Islam the essence of its message is in total contradiction with what Hinduism represents. Nevertheless, they are there to stay About Pakistan. Pakistan embodies the fundamental contradiction of the subcontinent, for it symbolises the fact that Islam always refused to be synthesised, absorbed, transmuted by Hinduism as all other religions in India were over a period of time, whether Christianity, Buddhism or Jainism. But Pakistan also prepares the future greatness of India, because the day where the two nations are reunited they will stand as individual entities, with their own culture, own religion; own soul. But for that, Pakistan and Bangladesh will have to recognise their fundamental " Indianness ".

The limitations of Islam ? This is the profession of faith of a Muslim:" I certify that there is no other God

than Allah, of whom Mohammed is the only prophet " Which means in effect: " After (and before) Mohammed, there is nobody else, no more avatars ". Thus the whole religion of Islam is based on a negation: nobody but us, no other religion but ours. And if you disagree, you shall die ". This puts a serious limitation to tolerance and from this strong belief sprang all the horrors of the Muslim invasions of India.

b) Why the Muslim invasions of India ?

Nobody will ever be able to estimate the incredible damage done to Indian culture, civilisation, human population and environment, during the Muslim invasions which spanned nearly ten centuries. But it should be interesting to see why these invasions happened, for no civilisation, if its inner core is strong and dynamic, can be trampled upon so mercilessly, as the Arabs trampled India. What ever happened to that great Vedic culture, which gave birth to so many wonderful dynasties, which in turn devised illustrious democratic systems and whose Kshatriyas were supposed to protect the land of Bharat against barbarian invaders?

Since the beginning of Human History, all civilisations have gone through the same cycle: birth-rise-peak maturity-decline-death. And so many great civilisations are no more but in the memories of our text-books: Mesopotamia; Egypt; Rome; Great Africa; Greece...Yet, because of its extraordinary spirituality, because of the Dharma stored by its great Rishis, India always had the extra impetus to renew itself, to spring

forward again, when it seemed she was on the brink of collapsing. It blossomed thus for at least five millenniums, more than any other civilisation before or ever after. Then India started faltering and Alexander was able to invade her sacred soil and later the Arabs raped her beloved land. Why?

Buddhists believe that each nation, like the human soul, packs karma in each of its lives or cycles. Good karma or Bad karma have one unique characteristics: they are like a tiny seed, bearing their fruits ages or cycles later, often giving the impression to the ignorant mind of total injustice done to innocent souls. Thus the individual who seems to suffer unfair circumstances in this life, may be paying for a bad karma done dozens of lives ago. In the same manner, a nation which appears to suffer inexplicable hardships: persecution, earthquakes, great natural catastrophes, dictatorships, may be amending for a karma accomplished centuries ago. The Tibetan people's plight seems to be a good example of this phenomenon. Here is one of the most harmless, peaceful, adorable culture on earth, spiritualised on top of that, who suffered and is still suffering the worst ignominies at the hands of the Chinese communists, who have eradicated their culture, razed to the ground hundreds of ancient and marvellous temples, killed either directly or indirectly - concentration camps, torture, famine - more than one million of this adorable people! Why? WHY? The Dalai-Lama, himself, one of the last great spiritual figures of this era, admits that it was because of an ancient "black karma", bad deeds. Was it feudalism? Was it not

opening itself to the world for so long? Or misuse of Tantrism? Who knows and who can judge? But it's a good bet to say that there is probably NO total injustice in this world. Everything springs from a mathematical, ultra-logical system, where one gets the exact reward one deserves, which bears NO moral connotation like in Christianity.

Thus for India, the Muslims invasions and later the European ones, must be the result of a bad karma. But the difference with Tibet, is that India's soul is so strong, so old, so vibrant, that she has managed so far to survive the terrible Muslims onslaughts and later the more devious British soul-stifling occupation. There seemed to be two reasons for the decline of Indian civilisation. The foremost is that in India, Spirit failed Matter. At some point, Her yogis started withdrawing more and more in their caves, Her gurus in their ashrams, Her sannyasins in their forests. Thus slowly, a great tamas overtook matter, an immense negligence towards the material, an intense inertia set in, which allowed for the gradual degradation of the physical, a slackening of the down to earth values, an indifference towards the worldly, which in turn permitted successive invasions, from Alexander to the Muslim and finally the European, the rape the land of the Vedas. The second reason and the one which has been most commonly invoked, including by Muslim apologists -see beginning of this chapter - because is it so obvious, is the fossilisation of the caste system and the gradual take-over of India by an arrogant Brahmin and kshatriya society. What used to be a natural arrangement - a

Kshatriya became a warrior to express heroic tendencies in him developed from countless births on earth- turned-out to be an inherited legacy, which was not merited by chivalrous deeds. A Brahmin who used to deserve his status by his scholarship and piety, and was twice-born in the spiritual sense, just inherited the charge from his father. And the shudras were relegated to a low status, doing the menial chores, when in their heyday, they fulfilled an indispensable role, which granted them recognition from the king himself. Thus Hindu religion lost its immense plasticity, which allowed her to constantly renew herself - and India became ripe for invasions. And finally, Buddhism and its creed of non-violence, however beautiful and noble, opened India's gates wide. Buddhists forgot the eternal principle of the Gita: " protecting one's country from death, rape, mass slaughter, is " dharma "; and the violence you then perform is not only absolved, karma-free, but it also elevates you.

c) The Muslim invasions of India

Let it be said right away: the massacres perpetuated by Muslims in India are unparalleled in history, bigger than the Holocaust of the Jews by the Nazis; or the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks; more extensive even than the slaughter of the South American native populations by the invading Spanish and Portuguese. We shall quote from the French historian Alain Danielou, as well as the Dutch scholar Koenraad Elst who has written a very interesting book called "Negationism in India (see next chapter), and

finally from Sri Aurobindo, who was one of the very few amongst Indian revolutionaries, who had the courage to say the truth about what was called then " the Mahomedan factor ".

"From the time when Muslims started arriving, around 632 AD, remarks Alain Danielou, the history of India becomes a long monotonous series of murders, massacres, spoliations, destructions. It is, as usual, in the name of "a holy war" of their faith, of their sole God, that the Barbarians have destroyed civilisations, wiped-out entire races. Mahmoud Ghazni, continues Danielou, was an early example of Muslim ruthlessness, burning in 1018 of the temples of Mathura, razing Kanauj to the ground and destroying the famous temple of Somnath, sacred to all Hindus. His successors were as ruthless as Ghazini: in 103O the holy city of Benares was razed to the ground, its marvellous temples destroyed, its magnificent palaces wrecked. Indeed, the Muslim policy "vis à vis" India, concludes Danielou, seems to have been a conscious systematic destruction of everything that was beautiful, holy, refined". (Histoire de l'Inde, p.222) In the words of another historian, American Will Durant: "the Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. It is a discouraging tale, for its evident moral is that civilisation is a precious good, whose delicate complex order and freedom can at any moment be overthrown by barbarians invading from without and multiplying within".

But more horror was to come, for without any doubt the bloodiest Muslim deeds in India were done from the 14th century onwards, thanks to the Mughals, who today have been nearly raised to the ranks of great art patrons and benevolent rulers, bringing to India such treasures as the art of miniature painting, ghazals and Sufism. For instance, Danielou points out that the sack of the magnificent city of Vijayanagar, which was like an island of civilisation, chivalry, and beauty, in the midst of a shattered and bleeding India, by Husain Nizam Shah, was an horror: "During nearly FIVE months, reminisces Danielou, the Muslims set themselves to the task of destroying everything, the temples, the palaces, the magnificent residences. The scenes of terror and massacre were unparalleled and mightier than the imagination can ever fathom. The victors grabbed so much richness in gold, jewels, precious furniture, camels, tents, girls, boys, slaves, weapons, armours, that there was not a single plain soldier who did not depart a rich man. And nothing remained after their departure of the most beautiful and prosperous city of that time, but smoking ruins". (Histoire de l'Inde, p.251)

Babur was another ferocious conqueror, indulging in unnecessary massacres and his ultimate goal was the destruction and the enslaving of the Hindus. His successor, Sher Khan, was no better, ravaging Punjab, betraying his word to the Rajputs of Malwa, who were all massacred one by one after they had honourably surrendered. Women and children were killed by the Rajput themselves, knowing what would happen to

them if they fell in Muslims hands. As for Humayun, History has treated him well, forgetting that he too, was a staunch Muslim. Under his reign, a terrible famine ravaged India, people were killed, erring miserably in their land. What happened to the beautiful land of Bharat, where once honey and wine flowed like an Himalayan delight?

Akbar was the exception in a sea of monsters, although he had his preceptor Bairam, and the regent Adam Khan killed, and was responsible for the great massacre of Chittor. In his 40 years of conquests, he too must have slaughtered his fair share of Hindus. Nevertheless, he was better than the average lot, maybe because his mother was Persian and he married Hindu wives. His intelligence, his love of arts, his interest for his people, his religious liberalism, make of him a unique emperor. Through his Rajput spouses, Akbar had a close contact with Hindu thought and he dreamed of a new religion that would be a synthesis of all creeds - and under him the Hindus were allowed some breathing space. Unfortunately, his successors started again their policy of massacre and persecution of the Hindus. Jahangir, Akbar's son, had Guru Arjun Singh killed. Jehangir was a warped personality, "he was moved by the shivering of elephants in winter, says Danielou, but had people he disliked whipped in front of him until they died. The story of how he had Husain Beg and Abdul Aziz, two enemies, sewn in the skins of a donkey and a cow and paraded in the city, has never been forgotten". (Danielou, Histoire de l'Inde, p.269)

But the worst of the Mughal emperors must be Aurangzeb. He had his father imprisoned till the end of his life, ordered his brothers executed and his own son imprisoned for life. Aurangzeb's religious fanaticism plunged India again in chaos, famine and misery. Aurangzeb was foremost a Sunni Muslim, puritan, unbending; he had the koranic law applied in its strictest sense, chased from the court all musicians and poets, banned all Hindu religious festivals and imposed the very heavy "jizya" tax on unbelievers. He thus made once more the Mughal monarchy highly unpopular and everywhere revolts sprang-up, such as the one of the Satnamis of Alwar. "Aurangzeb had them massacred until the last one, leaving an entire region empty of human beings". (Danielou p. 278). Aurangzeb also battled the Sikhs and the Rajpouts. But it's against the great Mahrattas, who spearheaded a Hindu renaissance in India, that Aurangzeb was most ferocious: he had Shambuji, Shivaji's son and his Minister Kavi-Kulash tortured scientifically for THREE weeks and after that they were cut in small pieces till they died on 11 march 1689. Aurangzeb was also the first Mughal who really attempted to conquer the South. By the end of his reign, there was nothing left in the coffers, culture and arts had been erased and the Hindus were once more haunted by persecution.

Fortunately, by then the Mughal empire was already crumbling; but the woes of Hindus were not finished. Nadir Shah, of Iran attacked Delhi in 1739 and for one whole week his soldiers massacred everybody, ransacked everything and razed the entire countryside,

so that the survivors would have nothing to eat. He went back to Iran taking with him precious furniture, works of arts, 10000 horses, the Kohinoor diamond, the famous Peacock throne and 150 million rupees in gold, (Danielou p.290). After that blow, the Mughal dynasty was so enfeebled, that India was ready for its next barbarians: the Europeans.

Chapter 5) : Negationism and the Muslim conquests

It is important to stop a moment and have a look at what the Belgian scholar Koenraad Elst, has called "negationism in India". In his foreword to the book of the same title, Koenraad explains that negationism, which means in this context "the denial of historical crimes against humanity", is not a new phenomenon. In modern history, the massacre by the Turks of 1,5 millions Armenians, or that of the 6 million Jews by the Nazis, the several millions of Russians by Stalin, or again the 1 million Tibetans by the Chinese communists, are historical facts which have all been denied by their perpetrators... But deny is not the exact word. They have been NEGATED in a thousand ways: gross, clever, outrageous, subtle, so that in the end, the minds of people are so confused and muddled, that nobody knows anymore where the truth is. Sometimes, it is the numbers that are negated or passed under silence: the Spanish conquest of South America has been one of the bloodiest and most ruthless episodes in history. Elst estimates that out of the population of native Continental South America of 1492, which stood at 90 million, only 32 million survived; terrible figures indeed but who talks about them today ? "But what of the conquest of India by Muslims", asks Elst? In other parts of Asia and Europe, the conquered nations quickly opted for conversion to Islam rather than death. But in India, because of the staunch resistance of the 4000 year old Hindu faith, the Muslim conquests were for the Hindus a pure struggle between life and death. Entire cities were burnt down and their populations

massacred. Each successive campaign brought hundreds of thousands of victims and similar numbers were deported as slaves. Every new invader made often literally his hill of Hindu skulls. Thus the conquest of Afghanistan in the year 1000, was followed by the annihilation of the entire Hindu population there; indeed, the region is still called Hindu Kush, 'Hindu slaughter'. The Bahmani sultans in central India, made it a rule to kill 100.000 Hindus a year. In 1399, Teimur killed 100.000 Hindus IN A SINGLE DAY, and many more on other occasions. Koenraad Elst quotes Professor K.S. Lal's "Growth of Muslim population in India", who writes that according to his calculations, the Hindu population decreased by 8O MILLION between the year 1000 and 1525. INDEED PROBABLY THE BIGGEST HOLOCAUST IN THE WHOLE WORLD HISTORY. (Negat.34)

But the "pagans" were far too numerous to kill them all; and Hinduism too well entrenched in her people's soul, never really gave up, but quietly retreated in the hearts of the pious and was preserved by the Brahmins' amazing oral powers. Thus, realising that they would never be able to annihilate the entire Indian population and that they could not convert all the people, the Muslims rulers, particularly under the Hanifite law, allowed the pagans to become "zimmis" (protected ones) under 20 humiliating conditions, with the heavy "jizya", the toleration tax, collected from them. "It is because of Hanifite law, writes Mr Elst, that many Muslim rulers in India considered themselves exempted from the duty to continue the genocide of

Hindus". The last "jihad" against the Hindus was waged by the much glorified Tipu Sultan, at the end of the 18th century. Thereafter, particularly following the crushing of the 1857 rebellion by the British, Indian Muslims fell into a state of depression and increasing backwardness, due to their mollah's refusal of British education (whereas the elite Hindus gradually went for it) and their nostalgia for the "glorious past"'. It is only much later, when the British started drawing them into the political mainstream, so as to divide India, that they started regaining some predominance.

Negationism means that this whole aspect of Indian history has been totally erased, not only from history books, but also from the memory, from the consciousness of Indian people. Whereas the Jews have constantly tried, since the Nazi genocide, to keep alive the remembrance of their six million martyrs, the Indian leadership, political and intellectual, has made a wilful and conscious attempt to deny the genocide perpetrated by the Muslims. No one is crying for vengeance. Do the Jews of today want to retaliate upon contemporary Germany? NO. It is only a matter of making sure that history does not repeat its mistakes, as alas it is able to do today: witness the persecution of Hindus in Kashmir, whose 250.000 Pandits have fled their 5000 year old homeland; or the 50.000 Hindus chased from Afghanistan; or the oppression of Hindus in Bangladesh and Pakistan. And most of all, to remember, is to BE ABLE TO LOOK AT TODAY WITH THE WISDOM OF YESTERDAY. No collective memory should be erased for appeasing a particular community.

Yet, what has happened in India, at the hand of Hindus themselves, is a constant denial and even a perversion of the genocide committed by Muslims in India. Hasn't the "radical humanist" M.N. Roy, written "that Islam has fulfilled a historic mission of equality and abolition of discrimination in India, and that for this, Islam has been welcomed in India by the lower castes". "If AT ALL any violence occurred, he goes on to say, it was a matter of justified class struggle by the progressive forces against the reactionary forces, meaning the feudal Hindu upper classes.." Want to listen to another such quote? This one deals with Mahmud Ghaznavi, the destroyer of thousands of Hindu temples, who according to his chronicler Utbi, sang the praise of the Mathura temple complex, sacred above all to all Hindus... and promptly proceeded to raze it to the ground: "Building interested Mahmud and he was much impressed by the city of Mathura, where there are today a thousand edifices as firm as the faith of the faithful. Mahmud was not a religious man. He was a Mahomedan, but that was just by the way. He was in the first place a soldier and a brilliant soldier"... Amazing eulogy indeed of the man who was proud of desecrating hundreds of temples and made it a duty to terrorise and humiliate pagans. And guess from whom is that quote? From Jawaharlal Nehru himself, the first Prime Minister of India and one of the architects of independence!

M.N. Roy, and Nehru in a lesser degree, represent the foremost current of negationism in India, which is Marxist inspired. For strangely, it was the Russian

communists who decided to cultivate the Arabs after the First World War, in the hope that they constituted a fertile ground for future indoctrination. One should also never forget that Communism has affected whole generations of ardent youth, who saw in Marxism a new ideology in a world corrupted by capitalism and class exploitation. Nothing wrong in that; but as far as indoctrination goes, the youth of the West, particularly of the early sixties and seventies, were all groomed in sympathising with the good Arabs and the bad Jews. And similarly in India, two or three young generations since the early twenties, were tutored on negating Muslim genocide on the Hindus. In "Communalism and the writing of Indian history", Romila Thapar, Harbans Mukhia and Bipan Chandra, professors at the JNU in New Delhi, the Mecca of secularism and negationism in India, denied the Muslim genocide by replacing it instead with a conflict of classes. The redoubtable Romila Thapar in her "Penguin History of India", co-authored with Percival Spear, writes: "Aurangzeb's supposed intolerance, is little more than a hostile legend based on isolated acts such as the erection of a mosque on a temple site in Benares". How can one be so dishonest, or so blind? But it shows how negationism is perpetuated in India.

What are the facts? Aurangzeb (1658-1707) did not just build an isolated mosque on a destroyed temple, he ordered ALL temples destroyed, among them the Kashi Vishvanath, one of the most sacred places of Hinduism and had mosques built on a number of cleared temples sites. All other Hindu sacred places

within his reach equally suffered destruction, with mosques built on them. A few examples: Krishna's birth temple in Mathura, the rebuilt Somnath temple on the coast of Gujurat, the Vishnu temple replaced with the Alamgir mosque now overlooking Benares and the Treta-ka-Thakur temple in Ayodhya. (Neg 60). The number of temples destroyed by Aurangzeb is counted in 4, if not 5 figures; according to his own official court chronicles: "Aurangzeb ordered all provincial governors to destroy all schools and temples of the Pagans and to make a complete end to all pagan teachings and practices". The chronicle sums up the destructions like this: "Hasan Ali Khan came and said that 172 temples in the area had been destroyed... His majesty went to Chittor and 63 temples were destroyed..Abu Tarab, appointed to destroy the idol-temples of Amber, reported that 66 temples had been razed to the ground".. Aurangzeb did not stop at destroying temples, their users were also wiped-out; even his own brother, Dara Shikoh, was executed for taking an interest in Hindu religion and the Sikh Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded because he objected to Aurangzeb's forced conversions. As we can see Romila Thapar and Percival Spear's statement of a benevolent Aurangzeb is a flagrant attempt at negationism. Even the respectable Encyclopedia Brittannica in its entry on India, does not mention in its chapter on the Sultanate period any persecutions of Hindus by Muslims, except "that Firuz Shah Tughlaq made largely unsuccessful attempts at converting his Hindu subjects and sometime persecuted them". The British, for their own selfish purpose, were of course greatly responsible for

whitewashing the Muslims, whom they needed to counterbalance the influence of the Hindus and the Congress. It is sad that Jawarlhal Nehru and the Congress perpetuated that brand of negationism. But that is another story.

The happiest in this matter must be the Muslims themselves. What fools these Hindus are, they must be telling themselves: We killed them by the millions, we wrested a whole nation out of them, we engineer riots against them, and they still defend us!... But don't the Hindus know that many orthodox Indian Muslims still cling to the Deoband school, which says that India was once "Dar-ul-Islam", the house of Islam, and should return to that status. Maulana Abul Kala Azad, several times Congress President, and Education Minister in free India, was a spokesman for this school. The Aligarh school on the contrary, led by Mohammed Iqbal, propounded the creation of Pakistan. What particularly interests us in the Aligarh school is the attempt by Muslim historians, such as Mohamed Habiib, to rewrite the Chapter of Muslim invasions in India. In 1920, Habib started writing his magnum opus, which he based on four theories: 1) that the records (written by the Muslims themselves) of slaughters of Hindus, the enslaving of their women and children and razing of temples were "mere exaggerations by court poets and zealous chroniclers to please their rulers". 2) That they were indeed atrocities, but mainly committed by Turks, the savage riders from the Steppe. 3) That the destruction of the temples took place because Hindus stored their gold and jewels inside them and therefore

Muslim armies plundered these. 4) That the conversion of millions of Hindus to Islam was not forced, "but what happened was there was a shift of opinion in the population, who on its own free will chose the Shariat against the Hindu law (smriti), as they were all oppressed by the bad Brahmins"...!!! (Negationism p.42)

Unfortunately for Habib and his school, the Muslims invaders did record with glee their genocide on Hindus, because they felt all along that they were doing their duty; that killing, plundering, enslaving and razing temples was the work of God, Mohammed. Indeed, whether it was Mahmud of Ghazni (997-1030), who was no barbarian, although a Turk, and patronised art and literature, would recite a verse of the Koran every night after having razed temples and killed his quota of unbelievers; or Firuz Shah Tughlak (1351-1388) who personally confirms that the destruction of Pagan temples was done out of piety and writes: "on the day of a Hindu festival, I went there myself, ordered the executions of all the leaders AND PRACTITIONERS of his abomination; I destroyed their idols temples and built mosques in their places". Finally, as Elst points out, "Muslim fanatics were merely faithful executors of Quranic injunctions. It is not the Muslims who are guilty but Islam". (Negationism in India, p. 44)

But ultimately, it is a miracle that Hinduism survived the onslaught of Muslim savagery; it shows how deep was her faith, how profound her karma, how deeply ingrained her soul in the hearts of her faithfuls.

We do not want to point a finger at Muslim atrocities, yet they should not be denied and their mistakes should not be repeated today. But the real question is: Can Islam ever accept Hinduism? We shall turn towards the Sage, the yogi, who fought for India's independence, accepting the Gita's message of karma of violence when necessary, yet had a broad vision that softened his words: "You can live with a religion whose principle is toleration. But how is it possible to live peacefully with a religion whose principle is "I will not tolerate you? How are you going to have unity with these people?...The Hindu is ready to tolerate; he is open to new ideas and his culture and has got a wonderful capacity for assimilation, but always provided India's central truth is recognised.. (Sri Aurobindo India's Rebirth 161,173) Or behold this, written on September 1909: "Every action for instance which may be objectionable to a number of Mahomedans, is now liable to be forbidden because it is likely to lead to a breach of peace. And one is dimly beginning to wonder whether worship in Hindu temples may be forbidden on that valid ground (India's Rebirth p. 55). How prophetic! Sri Aurobindo could not have foreseen that so many Muslim countries would ban Rushdie's book and that Hindu processions would often be forbidden in cities, for fear of offending the Muslims. Sri Aurobindo felt that sooner or later Hindus would have to assert again the greatness of Hinduism.

And here we must say a word about monotheism, for it is the key to the understanding of Islam. Christians and Muslims have always harped on the fact

that their religions sprang-up as a reaction against the pagan polytheist creeds, which adored many Gods. " There is only one real God they said (ours), all the rest are just worthless idols ". This " monotheism versus polytheism business " has fuelled since then the deep, fanatic, violent and murderous zeal of Islam against polytheist religions, particularly against Hinduism, which is the most comprehensive, most widely practiced of all them. It even cemented an alliance of sorts between the two great monotheist religions of the world, Christianity and Islam, witness the Britishers' attitude in India, who favoured Indian Muslims and Sikhs against the Hindus; or the King of Morocco who, even though he is one of the most moderate Muslim leaders in the world, recently said in an interview: " we have no fight with Christianity, our battle is against the Infidel who adores many gods ". But the truth is that Hinduism is without any doubt the most monotheist religion in the World, for it recognises divine unity in multiplicity. It does not say: " there is only one God, which is Mohammed. If you do not believe in Him I will kill you ". It says instead: " Yes Mohammed is a manifestation of God, but so is Christ, or Buddha, or Krishna, or Confucius ". This philosophy, this way of seeing, which the Christians and Muslims call " impious ", is actually the foundation for a true monotheist understanding of the world. It is because of this " If you do not recognize Allah (or Christ), I will kill you ", that tens of millions of Hindus were slaughtered by Arabs and other millions of South Americans annihilated by the Christians. And ultimately the question is: Are the Muslims of today ready to accept Hinduism ?

Unfortunately no. For Muslims all over the world, Hinduism is still the Infidel religion " par excellence ". This what their religion tell them, at every moment, at every verse, at the beginning of each prayer : " Only Allah is great ". And their mollahs still enjoin them to go on fight " jihad " to deliver the world of the infidels. And if the armies of Babar are not there any longer; and if it is not done any more to kill a 100.000 Hindus in a day, there is still the possibility of planting a few bombs in Bombay, of fuelling separatisms in the hated land and eventually to drop a nuclear device, which will settle the problem once and for all. As to the Indian Muslim, he might relate to his Hindu brother, for whatever he says, he remains an Indian, nay a Indu; but his religion will make sure that he does not forget that his duty is to hate the Infidel. This is the crux of the problem today and the riddle if Islam has to solved, if it wants to survive in the long run.

We will never be able to assess the immense physical harm done to India by the Muslim invasions. Even more difficult is to estimate the moral and the spiritual damage done to Hindu India. But once again, the question is not of vengeance, or of reawakening old ghosts, but of not repeating the same mistakes. Unfortunately, the harm done by the Muslims conquest is not over. The seeds planted by the Moghols, by Babar, Mahmud, or Aurangzeb, have matured: the 125 million Indian Muslims of today have forgotten that they were once peaceful, loving Hindus, forcibly converted to a religion they hated. And they sometimes take-up as theirs a cry of fanaticism which is totally

alien to their culture. Indeed, as Sri Aurobindo once said: "More than 90% of the Indian Muslims are descendants of converted Hindus and belong as much to the Indian nation as the Hindu themselves"...(Rebirth of India, p.237) The embryo of secession planted by the Mahomedans, has also matured into a poisonous tree which has been called Pakistan and comes back to haunt India through three wars and the shadow of a nuclear conflict embracing South Asia. And in India, Kashmir and Ayodhya are reminders that the Moghol cry for the house of Islam in India is not yet over.

* For more details, read "Negationism in India, concealing the record of Islam", by Koenraad Elst, Voice of India, New Delhi.

Chapter 6) : The European Invasions

Of the early European colonisers, the Portuguese seem to symbolise best the total disregard, ill will and destructive spirit of the West towards India. Whatever all the folklore today about the "relaxed atmosphere" of Portuguese Goa (the good life, the wine, the sensuous women), the Portuguese were a ruthless lot. In 1498, Vasco de Gama, the Portuguese "hero", was generously received by Zamorin, the Hindu king of Calicut, who granted him the right to establish warehouses for commerce. But once again, Hindu tolerance was exploited and the Portuguese wanted more and more: in 1510 Alfonso de Albuquerque seized Goa, where he started a reign of terror, burning "heretics", crucifying Brahmins, using false theories to forcibly convert the lower castes and encouraging his soldiers to take Indian mistresses. Indeed, the Inquisition in Goa had nothing to envy the Muslims, except in sheer number. Ultimately, the Portuguese had to be kicked out of India, when all other colonisers had already left.

There is no need to rewrite here the story of British India. From 1600, when the East India Company received its charter from Queen Elizabeth, to 1947, when Mountbatten packed up the Union Jack, the history of the British in India has been one of subtle treachery, crass commercial exploitation and sometimes of savagery. The English might have been totally ignorant of India's past greatness, when they set upon acquiring bit by bit their empire, but at least there was some early attempt at understanding each other

between a few enlightened Britishers and some Indians. But after the mutiny of 1857, the English went into a frenzy of murder, revenge and atrocity and alienated themselves for ever from the "natives". Henceforth they would live separately in their forts, or their cantonments, and would be totally segregated from Indians, ending for ever any chance of bridging the gap between the two cultures. Indeed, Danielou feels that the crushing of the revolt, "was to trigger the slow and insidious destruction of one of the greatest civilisations of the world, of its philosophy, its arts, its sciences and its techniques now despised and discouraged. This was disaster for universal culture, he concludes". (Histoire de l'Inde p. 329)

Another question should also be asked: was the European conquest a unifying factor in India? According to Western historians, such as A.L. Basham, yes. For prior to the British conquest, they label India as a nation of feudal kings, constantly infighting each other. But as seen earlier, when one discounts the theory of an Aryan invasion, when one understands the genius of Vedic India, the greatness of it institutions, the unparalleled tolerance and spiritual vision of Hinduism and how it had devised a remarkable political system adapted to its own needs and psychology, this theory does not stand under scrutiny. In truth, the British divided India; they exploited the schism between Hindus and Muslims and aggravated a small discontentment in the Sikh community. Dividing India to them was only a practical need to further their imperial dream - it was not done out of sheer fanatical

conviction. But does that make it more acceptable? Nevertheless, when History will be rewritten, the British will have to share the blame for the harm that was done to India. And their share has four names: MISSIONARIES, SECULARISM, INDIAN ELITE, REPRESSION.

a) The Missionaries Pre-Independence

The missionaries arrived in India on the heels of the British. As mentioned in the first chapter, their first prey were the Adivasis, the tribal people, which they promptly proceeded to name as the "original" inhabitants of India, who were colonised by the " bad " Brahmins, during the mythical Aryan invasion. "Was it not right, they said, to free them from the grip of their masters, who had enslaved them both socially and religiously"? Thus they set the Advisees against the mainstream of Hindu society and sowed the seeds of an explosive conflict which is ready to blow up today, particularly in UP, where the caste conflict is exploited politically by Malaya Sing and Chance Ram and in Bizarre by Laloo Prasad. The missionaries in India were always supporters of colonialism; they encouraged it and their whole structure was based on "the good Western civilised world being brought to the Pagans". In the words of Charles Grant (1746-1823), Chairman of the East India Company: "we cannot avoid recognising in the people of Hindustan a race of men lamentably degenerate and base...governed by malevolent and licentious passions...and sunk in misery by their vices". (as quoted by Sitaram Goel, in his book

"History of Hindu-Christian encounters, page 32). Claudius Buccchanan a chaplain attached to the East India Company, went even further: "...Neither truth, nor honesty, honour, gratitude, nor charity, is to be found in the breast of a Hindoo"! what a comment about a nation that gave the world the Vedas and the Upanishads, at a time when Europeans were still fornicating in their caves! Lord Hastings, Governor General of India from 1813, could not agree more; he writes in his diary on October 2d of the same year: "The Hindoo appears a being nearly limited to mere animal functions...with no higher intellect than a dog or an elephant, or a monkey..." No wonder that the British opened the doors wide for missionaries! After the failed mutiny of 1857, the missionaries became even more militant, using the secular arm of the British Raj, who felt that the use of the sword at the service of the Gospel, was now entirely justified. Remember how Swami Vivekananda cried in anguish at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago: "if we Hindus dig out all the dirt from the bottom of the Pacific Ocean and throw it in you faces, it will be but a speck compared to what the missionaries have done to our religion and culture "". These missionaries indeed poisoned the minds of the people they converted, making them hate their own religion, their own country sometimes, cutting them from their own cultural roots. What better example of this than the Anglo-Indians, a race which became neither here nor there, disallowing their Indian-ness, but never being fully accepted as their own by their British masters. Hence they had to die: evolution does not tolerate a people that loses its soul. It is the same

with the "Pondichériens" the French of Tamil origin from Pondichery. Originated from lower castes, they were converted by the early French missionaries and in time assumed French names, French manners and considered themselves as French. But today the French have forgotten them, they cost too much to their government and apart from a few brilliant exceptions, they are also a race which is slowly dying and is gradually engulfed by the Indian Tamils. It is also true that the missionaries, such as "Saint" François Xavier, broke down many "idol" temples to build their churches, although it never had the ruthlessness and ferocity of the Muslims. Nevertheless, the missionaries in India were (and still are) a divisive force, which used the Adivasis for advocating covertly a breaking-up of the country. Prof. A.K. Kishu, Secretary General of the Indian Council of Indigenous and Tribal people, has been lobbying hard at the UN so that the Adivasis are recognised as "the original settlers of India". Koenraad Elst writes that the missionaries were ultimately all set to trigger a Christian partition in India: "at the time of Independence, Christian mission centres had dreamed up a plan for a Christian partition in collaboration with the Muslim League. The far north-east, Chotanagur and parts of Kerala were to become Christian states, forming a non-Hindu chain with the Nizam's Hyderabad and with Pakistani Bengal. The secret agreement between the Muslim League and missionaries acting as "representatives of tribal interest", is sometimes used in Muslim propaganda, as proof that "Muslims and tribals are natural allies". Sadly for the Christians, Sardar Patel foiled their plans. (Indigenous Indian Page

229) Even after independence, the missionaries seem to have been involved in secessionist activities in India's north-east, as well as on the Burmese side of the border. Always pretending to act as mediators, they appear to have actually helped the separatists with vital informations. Since then, they have been dictating policies in Nagaland, Megalayam and Mizoram, which recently celebrated with great fanfare its century of Christian rule.

Finally, no history of the missionary involvement in India, can be complete without mentioning the health and education services they rendered. It is true, that unparalleled selfless service was given and is still rendered all over the country, that Kerala got 100% literacy, thanks in greater part to Christianity, that the best schools in India are Catholic, that the medical care is unique and most advanced. True also that sometimes this service is rendered out of true Christian charity, without any ulterior motive. But nevertheless, there is no doubt about the ultimate purpose of that selfless service. The South Indian Missionary Conference of 1858, set forth very clearly the goals of education in India: "the object of all missionary labour should not be primarily the civilisation, BUT the evangelization of the heathen...schools may be regarded as converting agencies and their value estimated by the number who are led to renounce idolatry and make an open profession of Christianity"... Has this policy really changed today? Not that much. The International School of Kodaikanal, under the guise of "religious studies", still tries to convert its students, many of

whom are Indians. And nothing symbolises better today the continuing spirit of the missionaries in India than Mother Theresa and other missionaries, who have been glorified by the book "the City of Joy" by Dominique Lapierre, a wonderfully written book, which unfortunately gives the impression that a small part of India (the slums of Calcutta), represents the whole of the country.

b) Secularism

Many post-independence Indians, particularly the Congress politicians, have always harped on the fact that "The British left no greater legacy in India than secularism". But in the name of secularism, how much irreparable harm has been done to India, how much damage, slander, stupidity has been heaped upon the land of Bharat! The beauty and the genius of a truly secular India is indeed appealing. Who would not dream of an India where all would live in harmony: Muslims, Hindus, Christians, Parsis, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, North Indians, South Indians, Assamese, Kashmiris, Sikhs, Nepalese... Which country in the world can boast of such a diversity, such an incredible mosaic of races, religions, ethnic groups ? There would be at the centre a benevolent, non-religious, liberal, reform-oriented, secular government, which would allow for unlimited religious and regional autonomies, so that the soul of each culture, each religion, finds its right expression in the fold of a united India. Is this then the democratic inheritance left by India's erstwhile masters ?

In reality, when the British arrived in India, they were only a handful, and realised that they could not govern such a huge country with so few of theirs. They then set upon dividing the nation, pitting each community against the other. In the Muslims they found a ready ear. It would be a total lie to say that the British engineered the Muslim-Hindu enmity and are to be held responsible for the creation of Pakistan. The Muslim-Hindu divide was a problem of religious incompatibility, on the parts of the Muslims, who saw in Hinduism an infidel religion, which had to be wiped-out. Now the clash of swords was no more, and the British were there to pacify everybody; but they very quickly scented blood and felt they could use the ardent wish of Indian Muslims to be separate on their own, now that the bitter realisation had downed upon them that they could not make of India a Dar-ul-Islam, a house of Islam. In the same way, the British were prompt to seize upon the dissatisfaction of the Sikhs, who had fought them ferociously but in peace served them as faithfully, forming with the Gurkhas their best soldiers. But in treating a minority community, the Muslims (or the Christians), on par with the majority community, the Hindus, the British conveniently forgot that there were more than 300 millions Hindus in India, that Hinduism is more than a religion, it is the very basis, for India's greatness and identity and that which unites all other Indian cultures and even religions: Dharma, the living truth.

c) The Indian Elite

The harm that the British did by using secularism for their own selfish purposes is not over. For when they came, they set upon establishing an intermediary race of Indians, whom they could entrust with their work at the middle level echelons and who could one day be convenient tools to rule by proxy or semi-proxy. They thus allowed a small minority of upper class Indians to be educated in England, hoping that in time with a few generations to spare, these brown Britishers would not only completely adopt English views, but would be convenient and supple instruments to use. These people, whether maharajas, lawyers, or journalists, were made to feel ashamed of their ways, to look down upon their compatriots, and thus tried to become more British than the Britishers, be it in their dress, in their thinking... or in their Hinduism-bashing. And today the dream has come true: the greatest exponents of secularism, those who flaunt this immoral weapon at every instance, are those who are in control of India, the elite of this country: the politicians, the journalists, the top bureaucrats, in fact the whole Westernised cream of India. And what is even more paradoxical, is that most of them are Hindus. But do they realise that this particular brand of secularism is a colonial leftover? That it has been planted in their minds? That they are traitors to their brothers, to their religion, whose greatness, tolerance, non-violence, compassion, is unparalleled in the world? An incredible harm to India was done by these Brown Sahibs. It is they who entertained the whims of Sir Syed Ahmed

Khan and later Jinnah, who very early advocated openly a separate nation for the Muslims of India, thereby setting the stage for the partition of India, all in the name of secularism of course. It is they who upon getting independence, have denied India its true identity and copied blindly from the West to frame its Constitution, unfit to India's own ways and needs. But again, this is another story.

d) Repression, Impoverishment

The British were certainly not the Muslims, whose ruthlessness and atrocities have never been equalled in India's history. Nevertheless, they did their fair share of harm to India, which has not yet really recovered from two centuries of Raj. Their brutality, whether the hangings of Indian nationalists, or the incredible ferocity which followed the great Indian Mutiny, or the massacre of Jalianwala Bagh, are today part of history. They ruled for two centuries with the unshakeable conviction of their own racial superiority which made Fitzjames Stephen, the philosopher of the Indian Civil Service say: "Ours is essentially an absolute government, which has for base not the consent of the Indians, but their conquest. It does not want to represent the concept of the indigenous population of life and government and can never do, because then it would represent idolatry and barbarism. It represents a belligerent civilisation and nothing could be more dangerous than to have in one's administration, at the head of a government founded on conquest-implying in all points the superiority of the conquering race, its

institution, its principles, that men who hesitate to impose themselves openly". One of the most important aspects of British India was the development of the British system of education and of the English language as the sole base of university teaching. Only the British diplomas were recognised and permitted to obtain a job. The ancient centres of Hindu culture got gradually bypassed and only the Brahmins kept the knowledge of Sanskrit alive.

Industrially, the British suffocated India, gradually strangling Indian industries, whose finished products, textiles in particular, were of a quality unique in the world, which had made them famous over the centuries. Instead, they oriented Indian industry towards jute, cotton, tea, oil seeds, which they needed as raw materials for their home industries. They employed cheap labour for their enterprises, while traditional artisanat were perishing. India, which used to be a land of plenty, " where milk and honey flowed ", started slowly dying. According to British records, One million Indians died of famine between 1800 and 1825; 4 million between 1825 and 1850; 5 million between 1850 and 1875; and 15 million between 1875 and 1900. Thus, 25 million Indians died in one hundred years ! The British may be proud of their bloody record. It is probably more honourable and straightforward to kill in the name of Allah, than under the guise of petty commercial interest and total disregard for the ways of a 5000 year civilisation. Thus, by the turn of the century, India was bled dry and had no resources left. Fortunately, visionaries, like Jemshadji Tata, started

important industries so that there would be a structure at independence, but in the face of so much resistance by the British. In textiles for example, they imposed the free entry of Lancashire products and slapped a heavy tax on export of Indian textiles. Is it necessary to remind too, how the English "exported" Indian labour all over the world in their colonies, whether to Sri Lanka for the tea plantations, to Fiji, to South Africa, or to the West Indies?

Culturally, there is no need to recall the rape of India. The thousands of art treasures, the diamonds, the priceless statues, stolen, which now adorn the houses of the rich in England, or the Queen's private collections. That the British still do not feel the need to hand back these treasures to India is a shame. The ecological rape of India is also a fact: the tens of thousands of tigers needlessly shot, the great massacre of trees and forests for the voracious railways and the razing of old forts and houses.

Finally, the history of the British would be incomplete without mentioning the positive side. The unification of India by a single language, although it is hoped that it will be eventually replaced by India's true language of the future, acceptable to all. The vast railway system, which more than anything else unified India. The remarkable Postal system, whose structures have survived till today. The roads network of India. But all these were not really meant for the welfare of India, but for a better administration of their own colony. And ultimately, the question should be asked:

"did the British leave India with any understanding, any inkling of the greatness of the country they had lived with for two centuries"? Except for a few souls like Annie Besant or Sister Nivedita, the answer seems to be: NO. And today, John Major probably does not understand one bit more about India than Lord Mountbatten did. But then Mountabatten ought to have known better.

Chapter 7) : The Independence Movement

It is hoped that one day the history of India's independence movement will be totally rewritten. For what is now taught, both in the West and in India, is often the history of the superficial, the apparent, the false even. And those who have least contributed to India's independence, or worse who were partially responsible for its most terrible traumas, occupy a place of honour in those books, while those who had a deeper vision and worked with dedication for a true, wholesome independence, are in the shadow and have been waylaid by Historians.

History wants us to believe that the independence movement started with the Indian National Congress. But originally, the Congress was a tool fashioned by the British for their own use. Witness the fact that it all began in December 1885, with an Englishman, A.O. Hume, with the avowed aim to: "Allow all those who work for the national (read British) good to meet each other personally, to discuss and decide of the political operations to start during the year". And certainly, till the end of the 19th century, the Congress, who regarded British rule in India as a "divine dispensation", was happy with criticising moderately the Government, while reaffirming its loyalty to the Crown and its faith in "liberalism" and the British innate sense of justice"!!! Thus for a long time, the Britishers considered favourably the Congress and sought to use it to justify their continuing occupation of India. But soon of course it changed into suspicion and downright hostility, as the

Congress, realising is folly, turned towards constitutional agitation to obtain from the British Parliament a few laws favourable to India. And the Englishmen did hand over a few crumbs here and there, such as giving Lord Sinha (Lord Sinha indeed!) the honour of becoming the first Indian to be part of the Governor's Executive Council...So what ?

What must be understood to grasp the whole history of the Congress, is that its pre-independence leaders were anglicised, western educated Indians, whose idealism was at best a dose of liberalism peppered with a bit of socialism "British Labour style". They were the outcrop of an old British policy of forming a small westernised elite, cut off from its Indian roots, which will serve in the intermediary hierarchies of the British Raj and act as go-between the master and the slaves. Thus, not only were these Congress leaders "moderate " (as they came to be called), partially cut-off from the reality of India, from the greatness that Was India, the soul-glory of its simple people, but because their mind worked on the pattern of their masters, they turned to be the greatest Hindu-baiters and haters of them all -as verily their descendants, even until today, still are.

But these westernised moderate Congress leaders, found it difficult to get identified by the vast mass of India which was deeply religious. Thus they encouraged the start of "reformed" Hindu movements, such as the Arya Samaj or the Brahma Samaj, through which they could attack the old Hindu system, under the guise of

transforming it, which is perfectly acceptable to all Hindus, as Hinduism has always tolerated in its fold divergent movements. It is these early Congress leaders who began the slow but insidious crushing of the Hindu society. For instance, the Congress Governments, which were installed after July 1937 in most of the provinces, encouraged everywhere the development of education modelled on the British system. And comments Danielou: "the teaching of philosophy, arts, sciences, which constituted the prestigious Indian cultural tradition, became more and more ignored and COULD ONLY SURVIVE THANKS TO THE BRAHMINS, without any help whatsoever from the State." When the first true cultural, social and political movements, which had at heart the defence of India's true heritage started taking shape, such as the much decried Hindu Mahashaba, which attempted to counterbalance the Muslim League's influence, or the even more maligned Rama Rajya Parishad, initiated by the remarkable Hindu monk Swamy Karpatri, they were ridiculed by the Congress, which used to amplify the problems of untouchability, castes, or cow worshipping, to belittle these movements, which after all, were only trying to change India from a greatness that was to a greatness to be.

"The Congress, writes Danielou, utilised to the hilt its English speaking press to present these Hindu parties as barbaric, fanatical, ridiculous; and the British media in turn, took-up, as parrots, the cry of their Indian counterparts". (Histoire de l'Inde, p. 345) To this day, nothing has changed in India: the English-

speaking press still indulges in Hindu-bashing and it is faithfully copied by the western corespondents, most of whom are totally ignorant of India and turn towards Indian intellectuals to fashion their opinions. But this strategy was good enough to convince the British that when they left, they would have to hand over power to the "respectable" Congress (after all, we are all gentlemen), even though it constituted a tiny westernised minority, whereas India's true Hindu majority would be deprived of their right. The Congress did turn radical finally in 1942, when because of Mahatma Gandhi's rigorous non-violence policy, it adopted a non-co-operation attitude towards the war effort. Thus the British declared the Congress illegal, jailed most of its leaders and embarked on a policy of heavy repression. But the truth is that those of the Congress who were imprisoned and are deified today for that fact, went there not directly for India's independence, but because Mahatma Gandhi refused to cooperate in the second world war.

So, ultimately, what was true nationalism? Who were the real revolutionaries, those who had an inner vision of what the British really represented, those who knew what was the genius of India and how it was destined to be great again? Once more, we have a wrong understanding of nationalism, because we are induced in error by the West's opinions about it. In Europe, nationalism means external revolutionary movements, revolutionaries, materialism. But India's greatness has always been her spirituality, her strength was always founded upon her Spirit's hold. Not only her

Brahmins, but also her Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras even, drew their heroism from that fountain. Thus in India, the nationalist movement, the REAWAKENING of India's soul started at the source, in her Spirit.

Sometimes a nation's soul is more predominant in one region, in one particular culture. In India's early independence movement, it was Bengal which held high the light of reawakening. This has often been forgotten and justice should be done again. Thus, in Bengal, there was born a man who could not read and write a single word. A man without intellectual training, a man who would be considered totally useless by Britishers, or westernised Indians. But this man's inner strength was so great, his truth so radiating, that from all over India, educated and uneducated, rich and poor, they came to the temple of Dakshineshwar in Calcutta and bowed at the feet of Shri Ramakrishna. The work of salvation, the work of raising India out of her lethargic sleep HAD BEGUN. Narendarnath Dutta, later known as Swami Vivekananda, was the brightest disciple of Ramakrishna, and a true son of India. He was the first spiritualised Indian political leader, an ardent Hindu, who was not afraid to call for Hinduism's adaptation to the modern world. He was also the first to inspire in the Western world a certain respect towards Hinduism, because of his education and his forceful personality.

But the man who was the true visionary of an independent India, the man who worked most of all for her liberation, the man who was a yogi, a saint, an

avatar, has been mostly ignored by history. Others, who played only a superficial role and did not have a millionth of his vision took the forefront. That man of course was Sri Aurobindo. Born on the 15th August 1872 in Calcutta, he spends his first years at Rangpur (now in Bangladesh) and at the age of 5 is sent to Loreto Convent school in Darjeeling. His father, who wants him to have a thorough Western education, packs him to England, where he enters St Paul's School in London in 1884 and King's College, Cambridge in 1890. Sri Aurobindo is a brilliant student and passes the I.C.S., but "fails" to appear for the riding test and is disqualified. After 13 years in England Sri Aurobindo returned to India on February 6, 1893 at the age of 20. He joined the Baroda State Service from 1897 to early 1906 and taught French and English at the Baroda college, before eventually becoming its Principal. It was at that time that he started writing a series of articles "New lamps for Old" in the Indu Prakash, a Marathi-English daily from Bombay. Sample of his early writings: "I say of the Congress that its aims are mistaken, that the spirit in which it is proceeding is not a spirit of sincerity and whole-heartedness and that the methods it has chosen are not the right methods, and their leaders in whom it trusts, not the right sort of men to be leaders. In brief that we are at present the blind led, if not by the blind, at least by the one-eyed. (Rebirth of India, p. 10). From 1900 onwards, Sri Aurobindo realised that passive resistance, constitutional agitation "A La Congress", was not the right path to achieve an independent India. In the true spirit of a yogi, he re-enacted the Baghavad Gita's

great message: that violence is sometimes necessary, if it flows from Dharma -and today's Dharma is the liberation of India. Thus he began contacting revolutionary groups in Maharashtra and Bengal and tried to co-ordinate their action. One should remember that at that time, and indeed until independence, violence against the oppressive British was not organised; it was the work of a few individuals or a sudden outburst of uncontrolled anger and that the famous freedom fighters of the Congress only went jail because they were passive resisters. At Sri Aurobindo's initiative, P. Mitter, Surendranath Tagore and Sister Nivedita formed the first Secret Council for revolutionary activities in Bengal. But action was accompanied by inner vision: "While others look upon their country as an inert piece of matter, forests, hills and rivers, I look upon my country as the Mother. What would a son do if a demon sat on her mother's breast and started sucking her blood?..I know I have the strength to deliver this fallen race. It is not physical strength- I am not going to fight with sword or gun, but with the strength of knowledge" (India's Rebirth, p. 16) In 1905, the terrible Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal. This divide-and-rule move was meant to break the back of Bengali political agitation and use the East Bengal Muslim community to drive a wedge between Hindus and Muslims, a policy that was to culminate in India's partition in 1947. Bengal responded to its partition with massive and unanimous protests in which many personalities took part, such as Rabindranath Tagore, Surendranath Banerjee, Bepin Chandra Pal... The ideal

of Swadeshi, which called for the boycott of British goods, spread widely.

It was at this time that B.C. Pal launched the famous English daily, Bande Mataram; Sri Aurobindo joined it and soon became its editor. Day after day, he jotted down his vision and tried to instil fire and courage in the nation through the pages of Bande Mataram. What was true nationalism for Sri Aurobindo? "Nationalism is not a mere political programme; nationalism is a religion that has come from God; Nationalism is a creed which you shall have to live.. If you are going to be a nationalist, if you are going to assent to this religion of Nationalism, you must do it in the religious spirit. You must remember that you are the instruments of God... Then there will be a blessing on our work and this great nation will rise again and become once more what it was in the days of spiritual greatness. You are the instruments of God to save the light, to save the spirit of India from lasting obscuration and abasement.."(Bande Mataram, P.655) But Sri Aurobindo had to fight against the Congress Moderates (who, it must be remembered came out openly for complete independence only in 1929) of whom he said: "There is a certain section of India which regards Nationalism as madness and they say Nationalism will ruin the country.. They are men who live in the pure intellect and they look at things purely from the intellectual point of view. What does the intellect think? Here is a work that you have undertaken, a work so gigantic, so stupendous, the means of which are so poor, the resistance to which will be so strong, so

organised, so disciplined, so well equipped with all the weapons science can supply, with all the strength that human power and authority can give... (Bande Mataram, p. 656)

Sri Aurobindo was very clear in what was demanded of a leader of India: "Politics is the work of the Kshatriya and it is the virtues of the Kshatriya we must develop if we are to be morally fit for freedom (India's Rebirth, p. 19). Or: "What India needs at the moment is the aggressive virtues, the spirit of soaring idealism, bold creation, fearless resistance, courageous attack". (India's rebirth, p. 22) But if the Moderates dismissed Sri Aurobindo as a "mystic", Lord Minto, then Viceroy of India, made no such mistake, calling him, "the most dangerous man we have to deal with at present". Thus Sri Aurobindo was arrested on May 2d 1908, following a failed assassination attempt on a British judge by a nationalist belonging to his brother's secret society. Sri Aurobindo spent a year in jail, which proved to be the turning point of his life as he went through the whole gamut of spiritual realisations. When he came out, the nationalist movement had nearly collapsed and he set about giving it a fresh impetus, launching a new English weekly, the Karmayogin, as well as a Bengali weekly, Dharma. This following is an extract from his famous Uttarpara speech, where he speaks of his spiritual experiences in jail: " Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have

perfected and developed through the rishis, saints and avatars, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising this nation to send forth my word...When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Santana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Santana Dharma that shall be great. But what is the Hindu religion? It is the Hindu religion only, because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and limited purpose...I say no longer that Santana Dharma is for us nationalism... Santana Dharma IS nationalism" (India's Rebirth, p.46)

In mid-February 1910, news reached that the British had again decided to arrest Sri Aurobindo and close down the offices of the Karmayogin. By that time Sri Aurobindo had the vision that India was free; for the external events are always preceded by an occult happening, sometimes long before they become "fait accompli". Sri Aurobindo then received an "Adesh", an inspiration that he must go to Pondichery, then under French rule. He settled there, with a few disciples, the number of whom slowly swelled, until it became known as the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. He wrote all his

masterpieces and devoted the remaining of his life to bringing down what he called the "supramental manifestation on the earth". The great Sage passed away on 5 December 1950.

Hinduism, true Hinduism was for Sri Aurobindo the basis for India's past greatness, it was also the essence of nationalism, the MEANS of liberating India and ultimately the foundation of the future India. Unfortunately, the leaders of the Indian National Congress did not have the same vision. Of these leaders, history has mostly remembered two, the most famous of all: Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Nehru, writes Danielou, "was the perfect replica of a certain type of Englishman. He often used the expression 'continental people', with an amused and sarcastic manner, to designate French or Italians. He despised non-anglicised Indians and had a very superficial and partial knowledge of India. His ideal was the romantic socialism of 19th century Britain. But this type of socialism was totally unfit to India, where there was no class struggle and where the conditions were totally different from 19th century Europe." (Histoire de l'Inde p. 349) It should be added that Nehru was not a fiery leader, maybe because of his innate "gentlemanship" and often succumbed not only to Gandhi's views, with which he sometimes disagreed, not only to the blackmailing of Jinnah and the fanatical Indian Muslim minority, but also to the British, particularly Lord Mountbatten, whom history has

portrayed as the benevolent last Viceroy of India, but who actually was most instrumental in the partition of India, whatever "Freedom at Midnight" a very romanticised book, says. (Remember Churchill's words on learning about Partition: "At last we had the last word". It may be added that the British had a habit of leaving a total mess when they had to surrender a colony, witness Palestine, or India-Pakistan - and they are today in the process of doing exactly the same thing in Hong Kong, under the guise of "democracy").

MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi was indeed a great soul, an extraordinary human being, a man with a tremendous appeal to the people. But, unfortunately, he was a misfit in India. Karma or fate, or God, or whatever you want to call it, made a mistake when they sent him down to the land of Bharat. For at heart, Gandhi was a European, his ideals were a blend of Christianity raised to an exalted moral standard and a dose of liberalism "à la Tolstoy". The patterns and goals he put forward for India, not only came to naught, but sometimes did great harm to a country, which unquestionably he loved immensely. Furthermore, even after his death, Gandhism, although it does not really have any relevance to Modern India, is still used shamelessly by all politicians and intellectuals, to smoke-screen their ineffectiveness and to perpetuate their power. To understand Gandhi properly, one has to put in perspective his aims, his goals, and the results today.

One has to start at the beginning. There is no doubt that after his bitter experiences with racism in South Africa, he took to heart the plight of fellow Indians there. But what did he achieve for them? Second class citizenship! Worse, he dissociated them from their black Africans brothers, who share the same colour and are the majority. And today the Indians in South Africa are in a difficult position, sandwiched between the Whites who prefer them to the Blacks, but do not accept them fully as their own and the Blacks who often despise them for their superior attitudes. Ultimately, they sided with the Moderate Whites led by De Klerk and this was a mistake as Mandela was elected and the Blacks wrested total power in South Africa -and once more we might have an exodus of Indians from a place where they have lived and which they have loved for generations.

The Mahatma did a lot for India. But the question again is: What remains today in India of Gandhi's heritage? Spinning was a joke. "He made Charkha a religious article of faith and excluded all people from Congress membership who would not spin. How many, even among his own followers believe in the gospel of Charkha? Such a tremendous waste of energy, just for the sake of a few annas is most unreasonable", wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1938 (India's Reb 207). Does any Congress leader today still weave cotton? And has Gandhi's khadi policy of village handicrafts for India survived him? Nehru was the first to embark upon a massive "Soviet type" heavy industrialisation,

resolutely turning his back on Gandhi's policy, although handicrafts in India do have their place.

Then, nowhere does Gandhi's great Christian morality find more expression than in his attitude towards sex. All his life he felt guilty about having made love to his wife while his father was dying. But guiltiness is truly a Western prerogative. In India sex has (was at least) always been put in its proper place, neither suppressed, as in Victorian times, nor brought to its extreme perversion, like in the West today. Gandhi's attitude towards sex was to remain ambivalent all his life, sleeping with his beautiful nieces "to test his brahmacharya", while advocating abstinence for India's population control. But why impose on others what he practised for himself? Again, this is a very Christian attitude: John Paul II, fifty years later, enjoins all Christians to do the same. But did Gandhi think for a minute how millions of Indian women would be able to persuade their husbands to abstain from sex when they are fertile? And who will suffer abortions, pregnancy and other ignominies? And again, India has totally turned its back on Gandhi's policy: today its birth control programme must be the most elaborate in the world -and does not even utilise force (except for a short period during the Emergency), as the Chinese have done.

For all the world, Gandhi is synonymous with non-violence. But once more, a very Christian notion. Gandhi loved the Mahabharata. But did he understand that sometimes non-violence does more harm than

violence itself? That violence sometimes is "Dharma", if it is done for defending one's country, or oneself, or one's mother, or sisters? Take the Cripps proposals for instance. In 1942, the Japanese were at the doors of India. England was weakened, vulnerable and desperately needs support. Churchill sent Sir Stafford Cripps to India to propose that if India participated in the war effort, Great Britain would grant her Dominion status (as in Australia or Canada) at the end of the war. Sri Aurobindo sent a personal letter to the Congress, urging it to accept. Nehru wavered, but ultimately, Gandhi in the name of non-violence put his foot down and the Cripps proposal was rejected. Had it been accepted, history might have been changed, Partition and its terrible bloodshed would have been avoided. Gandhi also never seemed to have realised the great danger that Nazism represented for humanity. A great Asuric wave had risen in Europe and threatened to engulf the world and it had to be fought -with violence. Calling Hitler "my beloved brother", a man who murdered 6 million Jews in cold-blood just to prove the purity of his own race, is more than just innocence, it borders on criminal credulity. And did not Gandhi also advise the Jews to let themselves be butchered?...

Ultimately, it must be said that whatever his saintliness, his extreme and somehow rigid asceticism, Gandhi did enormous harm to India and this harm has two names: Muslims and Untouchables. The British must have rubbed their hands in glee: here was a man who was perfecting their policy of rule-and-divide, for ultimately nobody more than Gandhi contributed to the

partition of India, by his obsession to always give in to the Muslims, by his obstinate refusal to see that the Muslims always started rioting - Hindus only retaliated; by his indulgence of Jinnah, going as far as proposing to make him the Prime Minister of India. Sri Aurobindo was very clear about Hindu-Muslim unity: "I am sorry they are making a fetish of Hindu-Muslim unity. It is no use ignoring facts; some day the Hindus may have to fight the Muslims and they must prepare for it. Hindu-Muslim unity should not mean the subjection of the Hindus. Every time the mildness of the Hindu has given way. The best solution would be to allow the Hindus to organise themselves and the Hindu-Muslim unity would take care of itself, it would automatically solve the problem. Otherwise we are lulled into a false sense of satisfaction that we have solved a difficult problem, when in fact we have only shelved it." (India's Rebirth, p. 159)

Gandhi's love of the Harijans, as he called them, was certainly very touching and sprang from the highest motivations, but it had also as its base a Christian notion that would have found a truer meaning in Europe, where there are no castes, only classes. Glorifying the scavenger as a man of God makes good poetry, but little social meaning. In the words of Sri Aurobindo: "the idea that it needs a special "punya" to be born a Bhangi is, of course one of these forceful exaggerations which are common to the Mahatma and impress greatly the mind of his hearers. The idea behind is that his function is an indispensable service to society, quite as much as the Brahmin's, but that being

disagreeable, it would need a special moral heroism to choose it voluntarily and he thinks as if the soul freely chose it as such a heroic service to the society and as reward of righteous acts- but that is hardly likely. In any case, it is not true that the Bhangi life is superior to the Brahmin life and the reward of special righteousness, no more that it is true that a man is superior because he is born a Brahmin. A spiritual man of pariah birth is superior in the divine values to an unspiritual and worldly-minded Brahmin. Birth counts but the basic value is in the soul behind the man and the degree to which it manifests itself in nature". (India's Rebirth, p.201) Once more Gandhi took the European element in the decrying of the caste system, forgetting the divine element behind. And unfortunately he sowed the seeds of future disorders and of a caste war in India, of which we see the effects only today.

Non-violence, you say? But Gandhi did the greatest violence to his body, in true Christian fashion, punishing it, to blackmail others in doing his will, even if he thought it was for the greater good. And ultimately, it may be asked, what remains of Gandhi's non-violence to day? India has fought three wars with Pakistan, had to combat the Chinese, has the second biggest army in the world and has to fight counter-insurgency movements in Punjab, Assam and Kashmir. Gandhi must have died a broken man indeed. He saw India partitioned, Hindus and Muslims fighting each other and his ideals of Charhka, non-violence and Brahmacharya being flouted by the very men he brought-up as his disciples.

However, his heritage is not dead, for it survives where it should have been in the first instance: in the West. His ideals have inspired countless great figures, from Martin Luther King, to Albert Einstein, to Nelson Mandela, the Dalaï-Lama or Attenborough and continue to inspire many others. Gandhi's birth in India was an accident, for here, there is nothing left of him, except million of statues and streets and saintly mouthings by politicians, who don't apply the least bit what Gandhi had taught so ardently.

History will judge. But with Nehru on one side and his westernised concept of India and Gandhi on the other, who tried to impose upon India a non-violence which was not hers, India was destined to be partitioned. Thus when the time came, India was bled into two, in three even, and Muslims took their pound of flesh while leaving. India never recovered from that trauma and today she is still suffering from its consequences. Yet has anynobody really understood the lessons of history ?

P.S. The history of India's independence movement would be incomplete without mentioning the West's contribution. Perhaps the redeeming factor for the Britisher's utter insensitiveness, lies in Sister Nivedita's recognising India's greatness and consecrating her life and work not only to India but to its independence. The Theosophical Society started in 1875 by Mrs Blavatsky, a Russian and an American, Colonel Olcott, and brought to glory by Annie Besant, has also done a great deal to further abroad Hinduism's cause. Its philosophy is

founded upon the recognition of Hinduism as one of the highest forms of revelation, as Mrs Besant wrote: "The action to pursue is to revitalise ancient India to bring back a renewal of patriotism, the beginning of the reconstruction of the nation". Unfortunately, the Theosophical Society got often bogged down in concentrating on the "magical mystical Orient".

Chapter 8) : 1947 - INDEPENDENCE

India was free. But at what price! Was this the independence that so many nationalists had fought for and for which they had lost their lives? Was this truncated, diminished, partitioned India the true Bharat of old, whose mighty borders extended from Cape Comorin to Afghanistan?

Moreover, who was responsible for the Partition of India? Yes, the British used to the hilt the existing divide between Hindus and Muslims. Yes, the Congress was weak; it accepted what was forced down its throat by Jinnah and Mountbatten, even though many of its leaders, including Nehru, and a few moderate Muslims, disagreed with the principle of partition. It was also Gandhi's policy of non-violence and gratifying the fanatical Muslim minority, in the hope that it would see the light, which did tremendous harm to India and encouraged Jinnah to harden his demands. But ultimately, one has to go back to the roots, to the beginning of it all, in order to understand Partition. One has to travel back in history to get a clear overall picture. This is why memory is essential, this is why Holocausts should never be forgotten.

For Jinnah was only the vehicle, the instrument, the avatar, the latest reincarnation of the medieval Muslims coming down to rape and loot and plunder the land of Bharat. He was the true son of Mahmud Ghaznavi, of Muhammed Ghasi, of Aurangzeb. He took up again the work left unfinished by the last Mughal two centuries earlier: 'Dar-ul-Islam', the House of

Islam. The Hindu-Muslim question is an old one - but is it really a Muslim-Hindu question, or just plainly a Muslim obsession, their hatred of the Hindu pagans, their contempt for this polytheist religion? This obsession, this hate, is as old as the first invasion of India by the original Arabs in 650. After independence, nothing has changed: the sword of Allah is still as much ready to strike the Kafirs, the idolaters of many Gods. The Muslims invaded this country, conquered it, looted it, razed its temples, humiliated its Hindu leaders, killed its Brahmins, converted its weaker sections. True, it was all done in the name of Allah and many of its chiefs were sincere in thinking they were doing their duty by hunting down the Infidel. So how could they accept on 15th August 1947 to share power on an equal basis with those who were their slaves for thirteen centuries? "Either the sole power for ourselves, and our rule over the Hindus as it is our sovereign right, we the adorers of the one and only true God - Or we quit India and found our own nation, a Muslim nation, of the true faith, where we will live amongst ourselves".

Thus there is no place for idolaters in this country, this great nation of Pakistan; they can at best be "tolerated" as second-class citizens. Hence the near total exodus of Hindus from Pakistan, whereas more than half the Muslim population in India, chose to stay, knowing full well that they would get the freedom to be and to practice their own religion. In passing, the Muslims took revenge on the Hindus -once more- and indulged in terrible massacres, which were followed by retaliations from Sikhs and hard core Hindus, the

ultimate horror. Partition triggered one of the most terrible exodus in the history of humanity. And this exodus has not ended: they still come by the lakhs every year from Bangladesh, fleeing poverty, flooding India with problems, when the country has already so many of her own. Some even say that they bring with them more fundamentalism, a Third Column, which one day could organise itself in a political, social and militant body.

For Danielou, the division of India was on the human level as well as on the political one, a great mistake. "It added, he says, to the Middle East an unstable state (Pakistan) and burdened India which already had serious problems". And he adds: "India whose ancient borders stretched until Afghanistan, lost with the country of seven rivers (the Indus Valley), the historical centre of her civilisation. At a time when the Muslim invaders seemed to have lost some of their extremism and were ready to assimilate themselves to other populations of India, the European conquerors, before returning home, surrendered once more to Muslim fanaticism the cradle of Hindu civilisation ." (Histoire de l'Inde, p.355)

For Sri Aurobindo also, the division of India was a monstrosity: " India is free, but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom...The whole communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the Nation will not accept the settled fact

as for ever settled, or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled; civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. The partition of the country must go...For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and frustrated. That must not be." (Message of Sri Aurobindo on the 15th of August 1947).

Sri Aurobindo had long seen through the British and Jinnah's games and had warned the nation as early as the beginning of the century. His answer to a disciple on October 7, 1940 is very illustrative of the point:" Q. But now that our national consciousness is more developed, there is more chance of unity if the British don't bolster up Jinnah and his Muslim claims. A. Does Jinnah want unity?...What he wants is independence for Muslims and if possible rule over India. THAT IS THE OLD SPIRIT... But why is it expected that Muslims will be so accommodating?" Nevertheless, Sri Aurobindo thought that although the old spirit of the real warriors of Islam, the Muslim invaders, was still present, the majority of Indian Muslims were unconcerned: "The idea of two nationalities in India is only a new-fanged notion invented by Jinnah for his purposes and contrary to the facts. More than 90% of the Indian Muslims are descendants of converted Hindus and belong as much to the Indian nation as the Hindu themselves. Jinnah is himself a descendant of a Hindu named Jinahbahai... (India's Rebirth, p. 237) Sri Aurobindo also sought to dispel the widespread notion that the Muslims brought

so much to India: "The Islamic culture hardly gave anything to the world which may be said of fundamental importance and typically its own Islamic culture was mainly borrowed from the others. Their mathematics and astronomy and other subjects were derived from India and Greece. It is true they gave some of these things a new turn, but they have not created much. Their philosophy and their religion are very simple and what they call Sufism is largely the result of Gnostics who lived in Persia and it is the logical outcome of that school of thought largely touched by the Vedanta... Islamic culture contributed the Indo-Saracenic architecture to Indian culture. I do not think it has done anything more in India of cultural value. It gave some new forms to art and poetry. Its political institutions were always semi-barbaric. (p.189 India's Reb). How could Partition have been avoided? Sri Aurobindo had advocated firmness: "As for the Hindu-Muslim affair, I saw no reason why the greatness of India's past or her spirituality should be thrown into the waste paper basket in order to conciliate the Moslems who would not be conciliated at all by such a policy. What has created the Hindu-Moslem split was not Swadeshi, but the acceptance of a communal principle by the Congress". (India's Rebirth, p. 189). History was going to show the accuracy of Sri Aurobindo's predictions: the Congress' obstinate pandering to Jinnah and his terms, proved to be disastrous and the partition of India was a blow from which the nation has not yet recovered.

All right, Nehru got his 'tryst with destiny', although a truncated tryst. India was free and everything was anew, the sky was the limit and a new glory was awaiting the land of Bharat. But what did Nehru and the Congress proceed to do with this new India? Writes Danielou: "The Hindus who had mostly supported the Congress in its fight for independence, had thought that the modernist ideology of an Anglo-Saxon inspiration of its leaders was only a political weapon destined to justify independence in the eyes of Westerners. They thought that once independence was acquired, the Congress would revise its policies and would re-establish proper respect towards Sanskrit culture, Hindu religious and social institutions, which form the basis of Indian civilisation. But nothing doing, the minority formed by the Congress leaders was too anglicised, to reconsider the value of what they had learnt. Few things changed in Indian administration, only the colour of the skin of the new rulers, who were most of the time lower ranks officials of the old regime". (Histoire de l'Inde, p. 348) And indeed, on top of the Partition tragedy, there is the other calamity of modern India: namely that under Nehru's leadership, it chose to turn its back on most of its ancient institutions, social and political and adapted blindly and completely the British system, constitutional, social, political, judicial, and bureaucratic. For not only the Greatness that WAS India was ignored, but unconsciously, it is hoped, one made sure that there would never be a greatness that IS India.

Democracy was then the new name of the game for India. But Sri Aurobindo had very clear ideas on "western democracy: "I believe in something which might be called social democracy, but not in any of the forms now current, and I am not altogether in love with the European kind, however great it may be an improvement upon the past. I hold that India, having a spirit of her own and a governing temperament proper to her own civilisation, should in politics as in everything else, strike out her original path and not stumble in the wake of Europe. but this is precisely what she will be obliged to do if she has to start on the road in her present chaotic and unprepared condition of mind". This was written, mind you, on January 5 1920 (India's Reb 143)- and it was exactly what happened. Sri Aurobindo also felt : "The old Indian system grew out of life, it had room for everything and every interest. There were monarchy, aristocracy, democracy; every interest was represented in the government. While in Europe the Western system grew out of the mind: they are led by reason and want to make everything cut and dried without any chance for freedom or variation. India is now trying to imitate the West. Parliamentary government is not suited to India..."

Socialism certainly has its values, as Sri Aurobindo observed in 1914. "The communistic principle of society is intrinsically as superior to the individualistic as is brotherhood to jealousy and mutual slaughter; but all the practical schemes of Socialism invented in Europe are a yoke, a tyranny and a prison."(India's Reb 99).

"At India's independence, Nehru opted for what Danielou calls "romantic socialism". Was socialism best suited for India? It was maybe a matter for the best in the worst, to forestall a complete take-over by communism,(*) which would have, as in China, entirely killed the soul of India and damaged for ever its Dharma. But if Nehru and the Congress leaders had not been so anglicised and had known a little more of the exalted past of their country, they would have opted for a more indianised system of socialism, such as the ancient panchayat system (which Rajiv Gandhi would attempt to revive later). Their socialism, although it was full of great and noble intentions, created great evils in India. Writes Danielou: "But this socialism was empty of meaning, for there existed no class struggle in India, nor social conditions similar to those in Europe. The controls established by a an incapable and corrupted bureaucracy, the ruin of private property, the incredible taxes slapped on capital, the confiscations, the dictatorial exchange controls, and the heavy custom duties, plunged India in a terrible misery. The lands of the zamindars were distributed to the poor peasants, without any institution of agricultural financing, and farmers depending 100% on the loan shark, got completely ruined and agricultural production went into a slump. The prohibition to export profits as well as the excessive taxes, forced all capitalist to flee the country." (Histoire de l'Inde p. 349)

One of the worst legacies of Nehru and the Congress is political. Like the British, Nehru centralised

all the power at the Centre, the states were formed in an arbitrary manner and very little political autonomy was left to them. This created a land of babus and bred corruption. In turn, it triggered in certain states such as Tamil Nadu, whose culture has been preserved much more than in North Indian states, (maybe because it was more sheltered from Muslim incursions by the Deccan plateau), a resentment against the Centre, who was trying to impose Hindi on them, for instance, and fostered a seed of separatism. And why should the Centre try to impose Hindi on all Southern states? Hindi is a language which is spoken only by a few Northern states. And why for that matter should the Centre impose anything on the States, except in vital matters such as Security and External Affairs?

Nehru also initiated the entire bureaucratisation of India, which was a terrible mistake, if only because it was a system established by the British who wanted to centralise and control everything from the top. It was all right when the English were there, they were the masters, they made their riches out of plundering the country and had no need to be corrupt. But how do you give so much power to an insensitive babu, who earns only a few thousand rupees a month? Hence corruption and bureaucracy flourished together in India under Nehru. The Soviet-type industrialisation, such as massive state industries, big steel, mills and mega dams, have already proved a failure in the West; yet Nehru and his successors all went for it. India became a state owned country which produced sub-standard quality goods. The only merit it had was to shelter her

from a take-over by multinationals and allow her to develop her own products, however deficient.

Nehru's foreign policy was often misguided. Nothing exemplifies this better than his attitude vis a vis Red China. He made the mistake of applying to the letter his famous "Hindi chini bhai-bhai" slogan, when he should have known that China could not be trusted. And indeed the Chinese attacked India treacherously in 1962, humiliated the Indian army and took away 20.OOO square kilometres of her territory, which they have not yet vacated. Nehru was generous enough to offer India's hospitality to the Dalai lama and his followers when they fled the Chinese occupation of their sovereign country in 1959. But in order not to offend the Chinese, Nehru and all the successive Prime Ministers, let down Tibet, not only by not helping them to regain their independence, but also by stopping the Dalai lama from any political activity in India. Do the Chinese show any gratitude? Not at all! They are still claiming Indian territory, particularly the beautiful Arunachal Pradesh and have used the Tibetan plateau to point their nuclear missiles at North Indian cities (exactly 90 IRBM -US Senate Foreign Committee report). More than that, India could never see that Tibet was the ideal buffer between her and China, if denuclearised and demilitarised, as the Dalai-lama has proposed in the European Parliament of Strasbourg. And India's betrayal of Tibet will come back to haunt her, as it did recently, when the Indian occupation of Kashmir was equalled with the Chinese occupation of Tibet. The Chinese killed 1,2 million Tibetans and wiped

out in 45 years a wonderful 2000 year old civilisation. On the other hand, in Kashmir, there has been no genocide, only war casualties and India is fighting to retain what has been hers for 5000 years.

Indians are so proud of their judicial system; but isn't it a carbon copy of the British one, with as a consequence, a flurry of problems, whether it is the political interference in the naming of judges, the incredible backlog of pending cases, or the overcrowding of jails? Again, the Indian judiciary relies for his judgements on western values, on European jurisprudence, which are totally unfit for India. Once more, it is proud of its " secular " values and often comes down heavily on the fanatical bigots, meaning the Hindus. In education, Nehru carried on with the British policy of imposing a westernised English system: more and more the universities and schools of India, many of them run by Christians missions, produced a generation of English speaking diploma holders, who did not belong any more to Hindu society, but only to a fake bureaucratic society with westernised manners.

Finally, Hindu-bashing became a popular pastime under Nehru's rule. Jawaharlal had a great sympathy for communism (*), like many men of his generation and indeed of the generations thereafter till the early 7O's. We have all been duped by communism, whose ideal is so appealing in this world of inequalities, but whose practise was taken over by Asuric forces, whether in Stalin's Russia, or in Maoist China. Nehru encouraged Marxist think-tanks, such as the famous

JNU in Delhi, which in turn bred a lot of distinguished "Hindu-hating scholars" like the venomous Romila Thapar, who is an adept at negating Muslim atrocities and running to the ground the greatness of Hinduism and its institutions. Today even, most of the intellectuals, journalists and many of India's elite have been influenced by that school of thinking and regularly ape its theories.

But ultimately, whatever his faults, Nehru was part of India's soul. He fought for her independence with all his heart; and when freedom came, he applied to India the ideals he knew best, however misconceived they might have been. He was lucky enough to be in office while India went through a relatively peaceful period of her post-independence history, except for the first war with Pakistan and the China invasion. And he must have felt gratified to see his beloved country through the first stages of her recovery from the yoke of colonialism.

(*) One does not want to dwell too much on communism in India, such as the one practised in Bengal, although in its defence it must be said that on the one hand it is an Indian brand of communism, as the influence of Hinduism was able to soften it. On the other, that the Bengalis are too great a race for completely being bowled over by a thoroughly materialistic ideology. Naxalism also had its meaning: when one sees the injustice going on in India, with the amazing gap between the incredibly rich with black money, marrying their daughters for lakhs of rupees in

the five star hotels in Delhi -and the very poor, who can barely eat one meal a day, one feels like taking a gun and doing one's own justice. But once again this is not the way for India, for she has another wisdom waiting to be used again and solve all her problems without violence. What is the future of communism in India? Like the rest, it may be absorbed back in her psyche, transformed and adapted to her psychology, for even communism can find its place, as long as it recognises the central Dharma of India. Or maybe will it disappear altogether from the land of Bharat.

Chapter 9) : India Today

a) Indira Gandhi

A lot of nasty things have been said about Nehru's daughter, Indira Gandhi. Was she as bad and evil as she was made out to be by the Indian Press, who mostly hated her? Certainly, she had a better understanding of the deeper, rural India than her father and ultimately she must have loved India in her own way. 20 years of nearly uninterrupted power probably does breed despotism in anybody. But can she be fully blamed for it? It was also the infrastructure, the way the Congress functions, with its totally centralised pyramid-like system, with one person at the top wielding absolute power. And ultimately Indira was also a victim of that extraordinary 'bhakti' tendency of Indian people, which is to worship anybody they feel has an aura about him, or her, no matter his or her personal faults, no matter if he or she is a fraud or half a fraud. Thus she may have become more and more isolated, bitter about losing her beloved son Sanjay, suspicious of the constant sycophantic atmosphere around her and slowly lost her sense of reality. Punjab and the Sikh problem was her undoing; it poisoned the last years of her reign and finally killed her in the most frightful manner.

Wonderful religion that of Sikkism: the only true attempt ever to synthesise Hinduism and Islam - and who knows what would have happened if it had succeeded. "The Sikh Khalsa, writes Sri Aurobindo, was an astonishingly original and novel creation and its face

was turned not to the past but to the future. Apart and singular in its theocratic head and democratic soul and structure, its profound spiritual being, its first attempt to combine the deepest elements of Islam and Vedanta, it was a premature drive towards an entrance into the third or spiritual stage of human society, but it could not create between the spirit and the external life the transmitting medium of a rich creative thought and culture. And thus hampered and deficient it began and ended with narrow local limits, achieved intensity but no power of expansion..." (Foundations of Indian Culture, p. 380) Unfortunately, the Sikhs, because they had to defend themselves against the terrible persecutions by the Muslims, became a militant religion, adopting hawkish habits, which even in time of peace they kept. And they also retained some of the more negative side of Islam: intolerance, or feeling of persecution, thus cutting themselves from the mainstream spirit of Hindu tolerance and width- from which they anyway came, and where they might ultimately go back. Today, but even more during Indira Gandhi's time, Sikhism is on the defensive, or rather displays an aggressive spirit of defence. Why? As Sri Aurobindo points out, Sikhism was a wonderful attempt at synthesising Islam and Hinduism, but because the conditions were not right, it faltered. And today, whatever the loveliness of Sikh rites, the incredible beauty of the Golden Temple and its wonderful atmosphere; Sikhism, like Zoroastrianism of the Parsi community, may be a stagnating religion -whereas Hinduism from which Sikhism sprang in greater part, is very much alive and remains the Dharma, the source of

all religions in India. it may be this unconscious realisation by the Sikhs that their religion is being slowly absorbed back into Hinduism, which triggers their militancy and fundamentalism. And after all, what is fundamentalism, but going back to the fundamentals, the foundations ? And Sikhism strove best when it was militant, when it fought the Muslims; thus unconsciously, the separatists of the late seventies went back to that crease, to that glorious epoch to regain their identity. That is all what separatism is, a desperate attempt to regain Sikh identity in the face of the all pervasive and subtle Hindu onslaught. The fact that the British had planted that seed of separatism and that later it was fuelled, financed and armed by Pakistan, certainly did not help. But can the British, or Pakistan, or even Indira Gandhi be credited with having of FABRICATED Sikh separatism? Mrs Gandhi was also accused of having 'created' Bhrindhrawale and made thus responsible for the whole Punjab problem. This is going to extremes; she may have helped politically Bhrindhrawale and thought of using him later to counterbalance her opponents in Punjab. That's bad enough; but Bhrindhrawale's fanaticism and violence was his own, he was just an embodiment of Sikh militancy and frustration; if he had not been there, another Bhrindhrawale would have sprung-up, with or without Mrs Gandhi's help.

Finally, Sikhs and many other Indians have not forgiven Mrs Gandhi for giving the order of storming the Golden Temple. History will judge. But think of it this way: would the French Government have tolerated that

for months, Basque separatists, for instance, be holed up in the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris, the holiest of all Christian shrines, with their weapons, issuing deaths warrants against politicians, and receiving journalists, as Bhrindhrawale did? Certainly not. These Basque militants would not have lasted three days in Notre Dame; the army would have been called - and although great care would have been taken that no harm be done to the wonderful 1000 year old church, it would have been a fight to the finish. Remember also what happened to the 350 militants who took over the Kaba in Mecca in 1989? Most of them were killed when the Saudi government sent its special forces against what is the most sacred place of worship in the world to all Muslims. And what about the men, women and children barricaded up in Waco, Texas, with only a few guns: the FBI went in with flame throwers and armoured cars, killing so many innocents; and nobody in the world found anything to say. It is a credit to Indira Gandhi and the inherent Indian tolerance, that Bhrindhrawale and his followers were allowed to hole-up for so long in the Golden Temple. No democratic government in Europe or any Arab state would have allowed such a situation to continue. It was unfortunate that the Golden Temple got damaged and so many were killed during the assault; but as the Head of Government, Mrs Gandhi took the correct decision. It was not her fault that the Sikhs allowed their most sacred place to become the shelter of men armed with weapons and with death in their hearts.

It is shameful that many Sikhs rejoiced when she was murdered in such a terrible way by her own Sikh bodyguards, men she had trusted, even though she had been told earlier to have all Sikhs removed from her personal security. To kill a woman lying on the ground with bullets, is a curse to any race that condones it. And ultimately, whatever her faults, Indira Gandhi - as she had predicted a few days before her assassination- did give her blood and her life for the country she loved in her own way. More than anything else, her presence at the top for nearly 20 years, symbolised how this country reveres women in all their roles, although they often are discriminated against. She embodied the best of Mahakali, including the darker side of the Goddess. Today, Punjab seems to be on the mend, even though militancy is still there, even though there are still extremists. But what is asked of Sikhs today is that they break their silence and come out openly for India. Unfortunately, the Sikh community, although its majority love their country and are peace-loving, hard-working, good-natured people, never COLLECTIVELY condemned the murder of Mrs Gandhi, nor stated their desire to stay as part of the great Indian community. Perhaps this is the curse of the Sikhs.

b) RAJIV

Rajiv Gandhi was typical of a certain breed of westernised Indians, totally ignorant about their own country, yet full of goodwill. It must be said to his defence that he was never interested in power, content

to be a pilot, hobby around and live a quiet life with Sonya and his two wonderfully brought up children. But fate and his mother's distrust for everybody but her own sons, decided otherwise. It must also be said that the man (and his wife and children) demonstrated tremendous poise and dignity at his mother's assassination- and what a horrible way to lose one's mother- which could fill one's heart with hatred and ideas of vengeance. Rajiv showed in his early years tremendous goodwill and a sincere aspiration to transform the Indian system. But there were two problems: one was that being totally cut off from the Hindu reality of his country, he applied to his effort misconceived ideas about what India should be. And two, that like Don Quichote battling the windmills, he had to fight the Congress system, its corruption and bureaucracy. In the end he gave-up this unequal battle and had to fall back on advice from the old guard. His ill-advised judgement in the Shah Bano case or his pandering to Palestine, were certainly more in tune with the old Congress policy of flattering the Indian Muslim community, as in the pre-independence Kalhifat movement, than his own opinions, for everything in his upbringing was pro-Western and Israel certainly was no enemy of his. He must have also secretly agreed with the Supreme Court judgement in the Shah Bano case. If his mother's downfall and ultimate death was due to the Sikh separatist problem, his undoing was Sri Lanka and the Tamil separatist factor there.

c) Sri Lanka

There seems to be little doubt that once upon a time, not so long ago, India and Sri Lanka were linked by a small strip of land, which can still be seen today from the air: Adam's Bridge. And this is how the first Tamils, those who settled in the North, came to Sri Lanka (are they the first inhabitants of Sri Lanka and not the Sinhalese? This is another question!). There is also no doubt -and the Sinhalese recognise it- that they are originally Indians, although some say that they came from Gujurat, others from Bengal. Thus it can be established beyond doubt that Sri Lanka and India are one ethnically, although they differ in religion (but the same can be said within India). And throughout the ages, under one form or the other, Ceylon was under the influence of India. That is why, when the British conquered it in the late 18th century, they chose to attach it to their Indian empire. But when they left in 47, in their desire to see that India never dominates too heavily the subcontinent, they facilitated the creation of Pakistan and handed to Sri Lanka its freedom. And India and Sri Lanka seemed to part way for ever, as Tamils and Sinhalese were left to war with each other, until Rajiv sent the IKPF in 1988.

One has to go back a long time to understand what decisive factors shaped the psyche of the island's two communities. And this decisive factor bears the names of two of the world greatest religions: Buddhism and Hinduism. The first one, Buddhism, is a gentle, peaceful creed, that teaches non-violence and brotherhood, even to enemies. Unfortunately, Ceylon, often called the "isle of beauty", has always been too tempting a

prey for sea-faring invaders. And indeed, successive colonisers, from Arabs to Africans, from Portuguese to Dutch and finally, British, preyed on the tiny, defenceless island. In the name of Buddhism and because, the Sinhalese are by nature a fun-loving, gentle people, not only did they hardly resist these invasions, but often, many of their women, mingled freely with the foreign intruders. The result can clearly be seen today on the faces of many Sinhalese women folk, with their African-curled hair, Arabic features and fair skinned faces. As a result, the Sinhalese slowly lost their sense of identity, their feeling of being a collective being, to the point that when the British came, they collaborated wholehearted with them and had to be handed back their independence on a platter, for want of a real freedom movement. Today, democracy and western institutions are just a flimsy cloak that the Sinhalese wear. Lurking underneath the pleasant, sometimes servile attitude towards Westerners, is a sense of hopelessness and a terrible violence. And in reality, since independence, Sinhalese politicians must have been some of the least farsighted of the entire subcontinent: nothing is made in Sri Lanka, everything has to be imported and only tea, tourism and Western grants help the country survive.

On the other hand, Hinduism with its strict caste hierarchy, which forbids much contact with outsiders, particularly sexual contact with foreigners, protected Sri Lankan Tamils from mingling with their invaders. Thus they preserved their identity, their racial purity and their culture. Sinhalese live an easier life in the South,

which was always more fertile than the arid North. As a result, Tamils have often been better at studies and more hard- working, (although one should not generalise). This was quickly noticed by the British, who often gave Tamils preference for jobs and university grants, thus angering the Sinhalese, who after all were the majority community.

It is this deep-rooted resentment of the Sinhalese towards the Tamil community which is the cause of the present troubles. When the British left, the Sinhalese quickly moved in to correct what they saw as an unbalance: they set on depriving the Tamils of most of the rights they had acquired under the British and proceeded to establish a Sinhalese-dominated Ceylon. And every time a Sinhalese politician tried to give the Tamils their just share of power, he quickly had to backtrack under Sinhalese resentment. For years, the Tamils bore the brunt of Sinhalese persecution. But one day, too much became too much and Tamil armed groups started springing up to defend their people. To cut short a long story, the LTTE finally emerged as the most ruthless and sole militant organisation. For those who remember the Tamil Tigers in their early years: young, bright, soft spoken university students, there was no doubt that they had started with a genuine aspiration to secure their just rights. But violence breeds its own violence and today the Tigers have lost all sense of measure and restraint, eliminating ruthlessly all what they think stands in the way of their freedom.

Yet, in 1988, Rajiv stepped in to mediate between the warring Sinhalese and Tamils. All kind of insulting epithets have been thrown onto the Jeyawardene-Rajiv Gandhi peace plan and the IPKF's role in Sri Lanka, but these are unfair (as unfair as accusing Mrs Gandhi of creating the Sri Lankan imbroglio by arming and sheltering the Tamil separatist groups in Tamil Nadu's coastal area. Those who vent these accusations have no knowledge of Sri Lankan history: 1) the problem goes back to 2000 years of strife. 2) The Tamils were at that time genuinely persecuted and faced pogroms. Short of India intervening militarily, it made sense to arm the Tamils so that they could defend themselves). The Rajiv Gandhi peace plan was the best attempt that could be made in the circumstances, to solve the ethnic war and ensure the region's stability - and the IPKF did not come to conquer and colonise, but to help. That the LTTE betrayed the hand that had fed it, because it wants total and unequivocal freedom and it saw India's move as thwarting it (that is the main reason for their murdering Rajiv Gandhi. If he had come back to power, as indeed he was sure to, he would have pressurised the Sinhalese to grant the Tamils a semi-autonomous region in the North-East). But that is another matter. India's thus got bogged down in a guerrilla war it did not want to fight, with one hand tied behind the back to avoid killing civilians; and ultimately it had to leave because of pressure at home and Mr Premadasa's intense dislike of Indians. Today, Tamils have actually come one step nearer to freedom. The partition of Sri Lanka may be considered a "fait accompli". It might take some time, but ultimately, some Sinhalese leader

will have to come to the conclusion that Sri Lanka's economy cannot be bled any more by this senseless war. What happens if one day the island's one million Tamil tea planters, (whose forefathers were "imported" from India by the British, another parting gift from dear Britannia), who up to now have kept away from the conflict, join hand with their North-East brothers? It would be the end of Sri Lanka. And how long can tourism, the island's other source of revenue, be promoted in the midst of strife? The LTTE have chosen for the moment to leave the tourists alone. But it would be enough that they kill a few, to scare away Sri Lanka's main source of revenues. But even if the partition of Sri Lanka in two is granted by the Sinhalese, with the north-east portion for the Tamils, the island will remain a hotbed of uncertainty, a potential time bomb in South Asia.

And this raises the question of India's security. What should be New Delhi's reaction in case of a Sri Lankan partition? Can India remain unaffected by whatever is going to happen in Sri Lanka? There are 55 millions Indian Tamils in Tamil Nadu. It has been shown already that instability in Sri Lanka breeds instability in Tamil Nadu. Certainly, Mrs Jayalalitha's autocratic ways, her godlike worship by her party men and her paranoia for security, which is justified by the terrible assassination of her friend Rajiv, are a direct result of Sri Lanka's strife. This frightful cold-blooded murder of Rajiv Gandhi, was a direct consequence of the Sri Lankan problem, which India cannot ignore.

And ultimately, it is hoped that history will remember Rajiv with indulgence and affection, even if he had little understanding of India's true reality and her spiritual genius had completely eluded him. He was a gentleman and one always courteous with everybody, including journalists. Like his mother, he also gave his life for India and his terrible death shocked millions of us that fateful night in Sriperambadur. Apart from his goodwill, he must be credited with having started the economic liberalisation of India, indispensable if this country wants to become a 21st century superpower. Has the long Nehru dynasty ended with him? Prianka, his daughter, already shows something of her grandmother's dignity and force. But time alone will only tell.

PS. * A word about Bofors is a must, as it ended Rajiv Gandhi's first and only tenure as Prime Minister. The Indian Press has made too much of the Bofors controversy and the whole thing is a hypocrite's scandal, as all political parties in the world use kickbacks on arms deals to finance their election campaigns. Rajiv must have been convinced by the old Congress guard to accept the Bofors kickbacks for the party through intermediaries - and lived to regret it, trapped that he was in his lies.

** The less we talk about his successor, V.P. Singh, the better. Here was a man of talent, certainly, but of an immense ambition under the guise of a Gandhian cloak. To achieve his lifetime ambition of becoming Prime Minister, he did not hesitate to betray his own leader,

Rajiv Gandhi. It should be remembered too, that he withdrew Rajiv's special security, when he knew very well that the man was on the hit list of not only the Sikh militants but also of the Tamil separatists. His own conscience will be judge for that act. V.P. Singh also did immense harm to India. His implementation of the Mandal Report, was only a move at assuring his reelection, even at the cost of splitting the country on caste lines. Who will ever be able to forget the Newstrack images of V.P. Singh's police shooting on students? There was an asuric force at work, of which V.P. Singh was only one of the instruments. With him would come Mulayam Singh, Laloo Prasad, and Kanshi Ram, who would also use the caste factor to divide India and achieve their political ambitions.

Chapter 10) : The Narashima Rao Years

Narashima Rao is an enigma. A soft spoken, cultured man, who rose by a twist of fate to become Prime Minister of India, just as he was getting ready to retire with his books and family. The man was chosen by the Congress elders, because they thought he could be easily manoeuvred; but for a while, he outsmarted everybody, until Congress lost the elections so badly in 1996, that he was replaced as Congress President by the wily Sitaram Kesri. Was he then a man of indecisiveness, as he has often been portrayed? Or was he the clever manipulator, who quietly waited for his hour, the politician who symbolised best the Congress' totally centralised power: one man at the top, deciding everything, keeping everything to himself, through whom everything goes, without whom nothing is done ? At any rate, one can safely say that the decline of the Congress party started with Narashima Rao. Economics however, is the bright side of his tenure; history will remember him as the man who really opened up India's economy, who had the foresight to name a non-politician, Manmohan Singh, as his finance Minister, who signed the GAAT agreements.

The Economics of GAAT

Did Rao have any choice when he signed the Uruguay accords? Probably not. With the crumbling of the Soviet Union, went India's principal political ally and main economic partner. The heavy borrowing from the IMF and the United States' intense political pressure, both economic and on Human Rights in Kashmir,

probably did not leave much leeway to the PM. Nothing, except Ayodhya, seems to have divided the country so much, as the GAAT agreements. Opposition parties, particularly the Communists, have lamented about "the shameful surrender to the capitalistic forces of the West", but could India really have afforded to stay out of GAAT? The arguments advanced against the Uruguay round might be valid: it is true that India had its back to the wall, although its leaders pretended that they signed it under their free will. It is even truer that its terms are mostly dictated by the industrialised nations to suit their own needs and to open markets which have been hitherto closed to them. It is also true that it is a form of economic neo-colonialism and that once again, it is the poor nations which are at the receiving end, even if this time the gun is held by businessmen. But once more, can India afford to be left out of such a stupendous effort at globalisation of trade, even if the impetus is given by the West ?

The answer is NO, for three reasons. The first and most simple one, is that everybody is in it and it would make no sense for India to stay out and thus miss the benefits it might entail. Not only India might be boycotted by the industrialised nations and suffer, but smaller and less relevant countries than her might profit from the accords and overtake India, which then would have to put double efforts to catch up with the rest of the world.

The second reason is that India has got to get rid of the leftovers of 45 years of socialist policies.

Socialism, as well as Communism, did once symbolise a wonderful ideal: that of a sharing the earth's wealth with everybody, that of equality -nobody is richer or higher than the other. But in reality, man's greed, his natural tendency to pervert whatever comes in his hand, his Asuric thirst for power, have made a sham of Communism in general and Socialism in particular. Nehru probably thought that Socialism was best adapted for India, a nation of monstrous inequalities and with its majority of uneducated, poor people. But the reality turned out to be quite different from what he had envisioned. It spawned an octopus-like bureaucracy, which has its tentacles everywhere and bogs down in paper work and pettiness whatever lofty ideas emanate from the top. It gave birth to colossal projects, such as the big dams, which have already proved a failure in the West, but which India is still trying to push forward. It triggered a tremendous parallel market of black money -one third of the economy, it is said, although things have improved since Manmohan Singh came to power. And more than anything, Indian industrialists shamelessly took advantage for 40 years of India's closed doors policies, often producing the most substandard quality products, which they peddled as the latest technology and sold at outrageous prices.

There can be no better example of this syndrome, than India's famed Ambassador "the sturdiest car made for Indian roads". The Ambassador must be one of the heaviest, clumsiest and slowest cars ever built on this earth; it was bought cheaply in the late fifties by

Hindustan Motors; yet today it is still advertises as "the latest in technology" and sold at an exorbitant price, with a waiting list of three months! But there are hundreds of brands of foreign made cars today which are a hundred times more robust than the Ambassador, cars who race in rallies in the harshest conditions for hours at full speed and still survive. But as long as there is no substitute for the Ambassador (you cannot really call the Maruti, a car most unsuited for Indian roads, a substitute), Hindustan Motors will still be able to pitch that most unfortunate car. The same can be said of Bajaj, who sold millions of outdated, scooters to gullible Indians and still does it. But these scooters were seen in the fifties on the Italian roads and today's European scooters have nothing to do with what Bajaj still advertises as the "latest in technology" No survey of the private enterprises can be complete without a word about the top of the range: the five star hotels. Nowadays you cannot get a single room in a five star hotel in any of the metropolitan cities for less than 5000 rupees. Their managing directors want us to believe that these are still "cheap prices" compared to international rates. But why don't they make instead a comparison with Indian standards of living, where a labourer sometimes earn 20 rupees a day, a middle class bureaucrat 5000 rupees and even a top executive will not earn more in a month than three nights' stay in a five star hotel. How much does the President of India earn by the way? What these Taj, Oberoi and others do not say, is that In Europe and the United States you can find very good 3 star hotels, whose facilities are as excellent as Indian 5 star palaces, for half their price.

Certainly in France you can get a room in a very decent semi-luxury hotel for 500 francs, that is 3000 rupees.

The public sector is no better. It should be enough to mention two of their white elephants: banks and airlines. Many banks in India are so hopelessly obsolete, that they have been used for 40 years to treat their customers as if they were doing them a service and not vice versa. The State Bank of India, that symbol of Indian socialist banking, is the best representative of that attitude. Take the State Bank of India Auroville International Township Branch, for instance, which has because of the presence of so many Westerners, one of the highest turnover of foreign exchange in the Tamil Nadu State. Yet after fifteen years, not a single rupee overdraft is allowed if a cheque for collection comes in and one rupee is missing in the account; they will not even bother to call you, but will send back the cheque. Yet, nobody wants to accept their cheques in Pondichery itself, which is only 7 kms away from Auroville, because they take weeks to clear them and charge incredible amounts for it... Something there has to change too. The other example is Indian Airlines, who continue to charge whooping amounts for their tickets, and like five star hotels, get away with it, by saying that theirs are still the cheapest fares in the world. But they are conning the customer, because what they are talking about is full fare, which amounts to business class fare. They conveniently forget to say is that in the West, there are all kinds of cheaper flights, night flights, weekend fares, return fares. You can fly from Paris to New York for as cheap

as 250 $, less than 9000 rupees for a 12 hours flight. Compare this with the more than 13000 rupees for a Madras/Delhi/Madras flight, which lasts only 5 hours. And the worst is that Indian Airlines forces the other Airlines to align themselves on their fares... And what about the shameful practice of having one fare for Indians and one fare for foreigners, both in hotels and airlines. Foreigners are not cows to be milked, but honoured guests to be treated courteously ! Since 1995, Indian skies have supposedly been opened to private airlines. But this is another scam; for in reality, private airlines such as Modiluft, possibly the best one, were so strangled by exhorbitant airport charges, taxes, uneconomical routes imposed upon them, that it ultimately went bankrupt. Unless prices come down, the enormous middle class market will never be tapped properly.

The third reason is less obvious, but India should take it in consideration. Western civilisation is struggling, its economies are in a bad shape, they have lost the supremacy that they used to enjoy for centuries. The Japanese, and lately, the so-called Tigers of Asia, Hong-Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, China and soon, it is to be hoped, India, have often overtaken the world Giants, particularly the United States. Thus it may be that the GAAT agreements have been formulated in the West as a last resort measure to save its imperialism and to preserve its ranking as the domineer of the world. But ultimately it is the developing nations, such as India, who will benefit from it, because tomorrow the sun is -at last- going to rise

again in the East. Thus even though it might look disadvantageous for India in the initial years, in the end the GAAT accords are going to turn to her advantage. And definitely the free market economy that they are going to usher is going to benefit her, because it will bring some balancing in her industry, eliminate the inefficient and force those who have abused the Indian customer, whether in the private or the public sector, to become more competitive and offer better goods. Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that Socialism has its good side. The caring for the poorer section of society, the subventions, the loans to farmers, the help to students, represent its more human aspect. Unbridled capitalism has shown that it has no such humanity and often makes the tiny minority of the rich, richer - and the great majority of the poor, poorer. Witness the United States or Mexico.

But if India is going to succeed in her liberalisation drive, if she is going to utilise the GAAT accords to become a major industrial power, achieving modernity and affluence, she will face a much graver danger than bureaucratisation, statism, or even corruption... Will she have by then lost her soul to modernity, as some say that Japan did - where spirituality today is only a few external rituals and society has become so robotised that Japanese have lost all sense of initiative? Listen to what Sri Aurobindo, the mighty prophet of the future, had to say in 1948: "There are deeper issues for India herself, since by following certain tempting directions, she may conceivably become a nation like many others, evolving an opulent industry and

commerce, a powerful organisation of social and political life, an immense military strength, practising power politics with a high degree of success, guarding and extending zealously her gains and her interest, dominating even a large part of the world, but in this apparent magnificent progression, forfeiting her swadharma, losing her soul. Then ancient India and her spirit might disappear altogether and we would have only one more nation like the others and that would be a real gain neither to the world nor to us".

The " middle of the road economy ", for India, means that the country always preserves her Dharma, her special spiritual genius, that this Dharma guides her through the pitfalls of the GAAT accords and through the dangers of liberalisation and modernity. That it preserves her from becoming contaminated by the invasion of a foreign culture, be it MTV, Rayban glasses, or Jurassic Park, which have killed the soul of so many other nations.

Chapter 11) : The Threat from Within

Narashima Rao had the misfortune to witness the Ayodhya drama and the internationalisation of the Kashmir problem during his tenure. To be fair to him, he was probably closer to the Hindu point of view on Ayodhya, than say, Inder Gujral, who became India's 12th Prime Minister in April 1997. Yet he was overtaken by the suddenness of events and had to react harshly to bolster up his image as well as India's reputation as a secular country. As for Kashmir, no Prime Minister, from Nehru downwards, dared to tackle the issue headlong, for fear of antagonising the Indian Muslims. Rao was no different. Nevertheless, during Narashima Rao's years, the twin dangers threatening India's disintegration came to the fore and exploded in full view. These dangers facing India today, come first from within, at the hands of Indian Muslims, Indian secularists and the missionary lobby, as well as from without from hostile nations. If India survives these two life-threatening dangers to her inner soul, from within and without, she has a change of preserving her dharma and fulfil her destiny.

a) Kashmir

History never stops. It keeps repeating itself under different names, at different times, in different costumes. "In Kashmir, wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1940, the Hindus had all the monopoly. Now if the Muslim demands are acceded to, the Hindus will be wiped out again." (India's Rebirth, p. 220) How prophetic again! But Sri Aurobindo could have added that today nobody

cares to remember that Kashmiris were almost entirely Hindus or Buddhists, before they were converted by the invading Muslims six centuries ago. True, today these Muslims in Kashmir have not only accepted as their own a religion which their ancestors had rejected, but they have also often taken-up the strident cry of Islam. Does any one remember too, that at the beginning of the century, there still were 25% Hindus in the Kashmir valley and that today the last 350.000 Kashmiri Pandits are living in miserable conditions in camps near Jammu and Delhi, refugees in their own land, they who originally inhabited the valley, at least 5000 years ago?

It's a common refrain today in most newspapers to blame the situation in Kashmir on the Government's policies in the Valley for 45 years. However, those who know the reality of Kashmir, the mentality of Kashmiris and who have been recently to the Valley, have no illusions about the truth in the "Himalayan Switzerland". In fact, there are quite a few illusions which have been nurtured about Kashmir over the years by the Press and the secular politicians.

Illusion N°1: India alienated Kashmiris through years of wrong policies. Those who have been in close contact with Kashmir, even in its heydays of tourism, know for a fact that as a general rule, Kashmiris never liked India. There was only one thing that attached them to India, it was the marvellous financial gains and state bounties that they made out of tourism. Even those Kashmiris who are now settled in India make no bones about where their loyalty lies. Talk to them,

specially if you are a Westerner, and after some time, they'll open their hearts to you; whether it is the owner of this Kashmir emporium in a five star hotel in Madras, or the proprietor of that famous travel agency in Delhi: suddenly, after all the polite talk, they burst out with their loathing of India and their attachment to an independent Kashmir.

Illusion N°2: the Kashmiris are fed up with the militants after years of fighting, militants' abuses and the complete dry-up of tourism revenues. The army might come-up with some disgruntled girl, who has been raped by the militants and whom they parade to the Indian press; or some family, whose father and sons have been killed by the Hizbullah because they're informers, might be willing to mouth their pro-Indian stance; but these are individual cases. Indeed, if you meet the Kashmiris of today, from the lowly unemployed sikara boatman, to the retired High Court judge, you will find that they are all unanimous in their hatred of the Indian army and their support of the militants. Kashmiris will stick together - and their family system ensures that they will support each other in need.

Illusion N°3: the democratic process has been restored through elections in 1996 and Farooq Abdullah will bring back peace to the valley. Actually, there is only one election Kashmiris are craving for and that is a plebiscite on whether they want to stay with India or secede...The answer in the Kashmir valley, would be a massive "no" to India (98%?). And as for Farook

Abdullah, the situation has not improved much since he came to power. On the contrary, his tenure could be very dangerous, for he wants the Indian Government to give Kashmir the kind of semi-autonomy the more moderate militants are asking for. And take for example his recent proposal of recognising the Line Of Control as the real border between the two Kashmir. And if non-Kashmiris, which means basically Indians, need a permit to enter the Valley, it is as good as giving Kashmir away.

Illusion N°4: The presence of Human Rights organisations in Kashmir will help to bolster India's international image. The Indian security forces in Kashmir are accused of all kind of atrocities. But this is war, not a tea party! If India decides to keep Kashmir, it has to do so according to the rules set by the militants: violence, death and treachery are the order of the day. And men are men: after having been ambushed repeatedly, after having seen their comrades die, after weeks and weeks of waiting in fear, one day, they just explode in a burst of outrage and excesses. Amnesty International chooses to highlight "the Indian atrocities" in Kashmir. But Amnesty which does otherwise wonderful work to keep track of political atrocities world-wide, can sometimes become a moralistic, somewhat pompous organisation, which in its comfortable offices in London, judges on governments and people, the majority of whom happen to be belonging to the Third World. Its insistence on being granted unlimited access to Kashmir is a one-sided affair. Did Amnesty bother at all about the

support given by the CIA to the most fundamentalists Mujhadins group in Afghanistan and Pakistan, support which led to the bleeding of Afghanistan today and the Pakistani sponsoring of terrorism in India? (Without mentioning the fact that most of the Western countries which today sit in judgement of India, raped and colonised the Third World in the most shameless manner; and after all it happened not so long ago).

And this leads to the next question: should then India surrender to international pressure and give-up Kashmir ? Well it all depends on the Indian people's determination. Each nation has, or has had in the past, a separatist problem. Today, the Spanish have the Basques, the French the Corsicans, or the Turkish, the Kurds. Amnesty International will continue to lambaste India in its reports about human rights violations. But has Amnesty the right to decide what is right or wrong for each nation ? Sometimes double standards are adapted by the West. Yesterday it colonised the entire Third World. Today; the United States, under the guise of human rights, is constantly interfering in other's people's affairs, often by force. It uses the United Nations, as it does in Iraq, in Somalia and Yugoslavia and is getting away with it. Can Amnesty International, the United States and the United Nations decide today what is democratic and what they deem anti-democratic and use their military might to enforce their views? But this is the trend today and it is a very dangerous and fascistic trend. Will tomorrow the United Nations send troops to Kashmir to enforce Pakistan's dreams?

Furthermore, there is today another very dangerous habit, which is to fragment the world into small bits and parts, thus reverting to a kind of Middle Age status, whereas small nations were always warring each other on ethnic grounds. It is the West and particularly the United States' insistence to dismantle Communism at all costs, thus encouraging covertly and overtly the breaking up of Russia and Eastern Europe, which started this fashion. But this is a dangerous game and tomorrow Europe and indirectly the USA will pay the price for it: wars will bring instability and refugees to Europe and the United States might have to get involved militarily.

Can India get herself dragged into this mire? Why should India which took so long to unite herself and saw at the departure of the British one third of its land given away to Pakistan, surrender Kashmir? The evolution of our earth tends towards UNITY, oneness, towards the breaking up of our terrible borders, the abolishing of passports, bureaucracies, no man's lands; not towards the building up of new borders, new customs barriers, new smaller nations. India cannot let herself be broken up in bits and parts just to satisfy the West's moralistic concerns, although it does have to improve upon its Human Rights record,particularly the police atrocities and the misuse of TADA. To preserve her Dharma, India has to remain united, ONE, and even conquer again whether by force or by peaceful means, what once was part of her South Asian body . For this she should not surrender Kashmir, it could be the beginning of the breaking up of India.

b) The Indian Muslims

Ultimately, what the Muslim invaders did during the centuries of their domination, was that they planted a seed of DIVISION, for at that time, their avowed aim, what was driving their extreme ferocity at converting entire nations at the point of their scimitars, was to turn the whole world into "Dar-ul-Islam", the House of Islam. And today, the seed has matured, whether in Kashmir, in Pakistan, or even in India. Once more, it must be emphasised at the risk of being accused of boring repetition: the point is not to come down on Islam, whose greatness can never be denied, if only because they represent one third of the world's population. The purpose is not to look back at history for a cry of vengeance. What has been done is done; you cannot wish away the Muslims of Bosnia, or of Kashmir, or the 12O millions Indian Muslims. They are part of history, they each belong to their different communities. The purpose is to look at history SO AS TO UNDERSTAND IT TODAY. The exercise is to glimpse back in time SO THAT WE DON'T REPEAT YESTERDAY'S MISTAKES. The Jews have taught us that the collective memory, the remembering of the Holocaust, Shoah, Shindler's list are meant for the world not to forget its monstrous aberrations. And even today, there is no doubt that Islam has never been fully able to give up its inner conviction that its own religion is the only true creed and that all others are "Kafirs", infidels. In India it was true 300 years ago, and it is still true today. Remember the cry of the militants in Kashmir to the Pandits: "convert to Islam or die"! And in the words of

Sri Aurobindo: " As for the Hindu-Muslim affair, I saw no reason why the greatness of India's past or her spirituality should be thrown into the waste paper basket, in order to conciliate the Moslems who would not at all be conciliated by such policy... (Sri Aurobindo India's Rebirth, page 161) But when will Indian Muslims understand that they have to be Indians first and then Muslims? Ayodhya is the perfect example of the unwillingness of the Indian Muslims to come to terms with the Indian reality; it is the symbol of a certain kind of insincerity and double standards.

c) Ayodhya

How many of those who have lambasted so many times the "Hindu fundamentalists" and lamented the destruction of the Babri Masjid mosque as the "death of secularism in India", have been to Ayodhya? (not Faizabad, mind you, which is Ayodhya's twin Muslim city). When one arrived in Ayodhya before the destruction of the mosque, one was struck by the fact that it was a Hindu town "par excellence". More than Benares even, it is dotted everywhere with innumerable temples; it has all these old Hindus houses and this lovely river with its ghats which runs through the lower town. And then, forlorn on the top, there was this lone mosque with its two ugly domes, which looked so out of place and unused, that any one with a right sense -and that includes the Muslims- should see that it was not worth making an issue of.

The destruction of the Babri Masjid has evoked such fiery reactions, that the importance of Ayodhya

has been totally overlooked: Ayodhya is a symbol, through which two India's are facing each other. And the outcome of their confrontation will shape the future of this country for generations to come. The first India wants to be secular and unite together through an egalitarian, democratic spirit all the minorities, ethnic groups, religions and people of the country. But the question is: what would be the binding element of this kind of India? Secularism, says the first side. But secularism has a different meaning for each one, as we saw in the preceding chapters. For the British, it was a convenient way to divide and rule, by treating each Indian community on par, although some were in minority and others in majority, thereby planting the seeds of separatisms. For the Congress Party, it has always meant giving in to the Muslims' demands, because its leaders never could really make out if the allegiance of Indian Muslims first want to India and then to Islam - or vice-versa. And for India's intelligentsia, its writers, journalists, top bureaucrats, the majority of whom are Hindus, it means, apart from spitting on its own religion and brothers, an India which would be a faithful copy of the West: liberal, modern, atheist, industrialised, intellectual and western-oriented.

Furthermore, what makes India unique? Certainly not its small elite which apes the West; there are millions of these western clones in the developing world who wear a tie, read the New York Times and swear by liberalism and secularism to save their countries from doom. Nor its modern youth, whom you meet in Delhi's

swank parties, who are full of the Star TV culture, who wear the latest Klein jeans and Lacoste T Shirts, and who in general are useless, fat, rich parasites, in a country which has so many talented youngsters who live in poverty. Not even its political, bureaucratic and judicial system; it's a copy of the British set up, which is not fully adapted to India's unique character and conditions. What then?

The second India which is confronting the other at Ayodhya is of a course the India of the Hindus. When Imam Bhukari states that "we (the Mughals) gave everything to this country, its culture, its manners, its arts (and he adds: "the Hindus by destroying the Babri Masjid show how little gratitude they have"), apart from making a pompous declaration, he proclaims exactly the opposite of the reality. Because the truth is that not only Hinduism is what makes India unique, so different from all the other nations of the world, but it is the single most important influence in Indian history. In the words of Sri Aurobindo: "The inner principle of Hinduism, the most tolerant and receptive of all religious systems, is not sharply exclusive like the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam...it is the fulfilment of the highest tendencies of human civilisation and it will include in its sweep the most vital impulses of modern life.."

And indeed, if you look at India today, you find that Hinduism has permeated, influenced, shaped, every part of this country, every religion, every culture. Be it the Christians who are like no other Catholics of

the world, or Indian Muslims, who whatever they may say, are utterly different from their brothers in Saudi Arabia. But Hinduism is too narrow a word, it's a corruption of the original word "Indu", for true Hinduism is Dharma, India's infinite and eternal spiritual knowledge, which took shape into so many varied expressions throughout the ages, be it the Vedantas, Buddhism, or the Arya Samaj and which is today still very much alive in India, particularly in its rural masses, which after all constitute 80% of its population. And the words of the great Sage still echo in our ears: "Each nation is a shakti or power of the evolving spirit in humanity and lives by the principle it embodies. India is the Bharata Shakti, the living energy of a great spiritual conception- and fidelity to it is the very principle of her existence...But we must have a firm faith that India must rise and be great and that everything that happened, every difficulty, every reverse must help and further the end..."

What one has to grasp is that Ayodhya only makes sense when the immense harm the Muslims did to India is not negated, as indeed they have been and still are today, whether in Kashmir, where the last Hindus were made to flee in terror, or in Afghanistan, where the entire Hindu community was made to leave by the Mujahedins, without the world batting an eyelid, or in Bangladesh, where the crowds still regularly go on rampage against Hindus and their temples (as told by a Bangladeshi Muslim herself, Talisma Nasreen). It is in this light, that it becomes extraordinary for an impartial observer to see today that when for once, the Hindus

wanted to displace, not even to destroy, ONE mosque and rebuild the "temple", which they believe was built in this particular place, for one of their most cherished Gods, the one which is loved universally by all, men, women, children, THEY are treated as rabid fundamentalists. The great Mughals must be laughing all the way down their graves! What a reversal of situation! What a turnabout of history! And when the mosque was destroyed, it evoked such fiery reactions, such pompous, overblown, sanctimonious, holier-than-thou, atrocious, ridiculous, sly and totally undeserved outrage, both within India and in the Western world (who should be the last one to give lessons to India), that the importance of Ayodhya as a symbol has been totally overlooked.

The obvious trap is to think that the demolition of the mosque in Ayodhya is something to gloat about and that it is the duty of all good Hindus to see that other important mosques at Mathura, Vanarasi, or elsewhere, be also razed to the ground; or that all cities with a Muslim name be renamed with a Hindu one. This is not true Hinduism, which has always shown its tolerance and accepted in its fold other creeds and faiths. Indeed a true "Indu" India will be secular in the correct sense of the term: it will give freedom to each religion, each culture, so that it develops itself in the bosom of a Greater India, of which dharma, true spirituality, will be the cementing factor. Nevertheless, the destruction of the Babri Masjid, however unfortunate, has made its point: the occult Mughal hold over Hindu India has

been broken and centuries of Hindu submission erased. Hindus have proved that they too can fight.

d) The Indian Elite

Do educated Indians suffer from an inferiority complex vis à vis the West ? Do they think theirs is a lesser democracy, afflicted with all the world's ills ? Does India's elite look down upon its own country ? To a Westerner, it seems very much so. India's upper class, the cream of this nation, the privileged, those very men and women who had the great fortune not to be born in need, appear to enjoy India-bashing. Nothing seems to find grace in their eyes: everything is rotten, the system, the government, the politicians, the bureaucracy. Nothing works, nothing is possible, everything is bleak, worthless, hopeless.

But the truth is that those Indians who constantly negate India, are ashamed of their country. Educated Indians always seem to compare their democracy to Western standards. Their parameters appear to be set by what the West thinks about India, by Amnesty International's comments on their nation. They want to apply to India the same norms which are used in the industrialised world. And extraordinarily, many of India's elite ridicule what makes this country unique in the world, what no other nation in the word possesses: Dharma, true Hinduism; the knowledge passed down by thousands of sages, saints, yogis, sadhus of the Eternal Truth, that which gives a meaning to this otherwise senseless life and which the West has totally lost: the Wheel of Life, the endless rebirths and

ultimately the evolutionary Ascension of man towards the Ultimate Truth.

As we saw earlier, when the British invaded India, they quickly set upon trying to destroy what they perceived as paganism, but which was in reality India's many-sided perception of truth, Hinduism, the Santanam Dharma of the Vedic sages. Fortunately for India, they never succeeded in their task, but they did manage to win over a small portion of India's elite population. These people, whether maharajas, lawyers, or journalists, were made to feel ashamed of their own ways and thus tried to become more British than the Britishers, be it in their dress, in their thinking... or in their Hinduism-bashing. It is they who upon getting independence, denied India its true identity and copied blindly from the West to frame its Constitution, unfit to India's own ways and needs. It is they who today are ready again to split India at the seams, let go of Kashmir, of Punjab, of Assam, of Gorkhaland, Jarkhaland, and tomorrow Tamil land, all in the name of democracy and human rights, of course.

Do not Indians realise that by constantly belittling their own country and seeing it the way the West wants them to perceive it, they are handing over India to her enemies, those who wish her ill? Those who would like to see her humbled, broken, fragmented? Do these people want to see India go the way of Yugoslavia? Don't they realise that they are traitors to their own country, to its uniqueness, to is unparalleled greatness? That ultimately their India-bashing is a colonial

leftover? An unconscious inferiority complex, which has been planted in the minds of their ancestors more than two centuries ago?

Nobody in India is more representative of this Hindu-bashing syndrome than some of the Indian Press. They whipped up the Ayodhya controversy, forcing the Congress and the Muslim leadership to make a stand for the mosque, when actually this disused, ugly structure, in the midst of a wholly Hindu city had no relevance for any one who has some common sense. It is they who labelled Hindus as Nazis fundamentalists, it is they who called Advani a Hitler (do they have any knowledge of European history: Hitler killed in cold blood 6 millions Jews and crores of other people). It is they who in the aftermath of the destruction shouted themselves hoarse over "the end of our secularism" or "the mortal blow to our democracy", forgetting in the heat of their self-righteousness that Ayodhya was a symbol. True, the Indian Press should also be praised for its incredible diversity, for its inexhaustible reserve of talented writers, for its investigative journalism which makes sense when it helps uncover corruption, injustice, or political despotism. But again, it should learn to look at things NOT through the Western prism, but through the Indian looking glass, and apply to India standards that are Her own and of which she has nothing to be ashamed, because they are unique in the world.

e)Missionaries post-independence : Exploding the Mother Theresa myth

The Christians are a much quieter force than the Muslims. They do not advocate openly the breaking-up of India, and certainly the great majority of Catholics in India are peaceful Indian citizens. Yet the missionary spirit brought in by the British is still alive in India and goes on, as Arun Shourie demonstrated in his book, quietly about its work. And nothing symbolises this spirit better than Mother Theresa. Nobody has forgotten the film produced by Tarik Ali for Britain's Channel 4- which attacked Mother Theresa " for being a friend of the despots and a religious bigot ". It created a scandal and an outrage and even in India, many intellectuals sprang-up to the defence of Mother Theresa. Vir Sanghvi, editor of Sunday Magazine, said: " Gosh he is so outrageous "; Sunita Sen gushed in India Today: " bad faith, bad taste ". The whole episode seemed quite fruitless and has died down. But in retrospective, a question may be asked: has not the film missed more relevant points, which could be summarised thus: 1) what does Mother Theresa really stand for? 2) Why do Indians defend her so ardently ?

Foremost one should say in defence of Mother Theresa that she certainly is doing saintly work. After all, there is no denying that it takes a Westerner to pick-up the dying in the streets of Calcutta and raise abandoned orphans, a thankless task if there is one. Indian themselves, and particularly the Hindus, even though their religion has taught them compassion for 4000 years, have become very callous towards their less fortunate brethren; and the recent plague has shown the widening gap between the fortunate and the

less than lucky. This said, one can wonder: what does Mother Theresa really stand for? Is caring for the dying and orphaned children her only goal ? Well, if you have observed her carefully over the years, you will notice that she does not say much. She does speak against contraception and abortion, in a country of nearly one billion, where an ever growing population is swallowing whatever little economic progress is made; where the masses make life in India more and more miserable, invading the cities, crowding their streets and polluting their environments; where for 30 years the Indian Government has directed a courageous and democratic birth control programme, (whether in China demographic control has achieved though autocratic means). What else does Mother Theresa say: she speaks of the dying of the streets in Calcutta, of course, of the poor of India left unattended, of the miseries of the cities. Fair enough, but then it must be pointed out to her, that she projects to the whole world an image of India which is entirely negative: of poverty beyond humanity, of a society which abandons its children, of dying without dignity. OK, there is some truth in it. But then it may be asked again: does Mother Theresa ever attempt to counterbalance this negative image of India, of which she is the vector, by a more positive one ? After all, she has lived here so long, that she knows the country as well as any Indian, having even adopted Indian nationality. Surely she can defend her own country? She could for example speak about India infinite spirituality, her exquisite culture, the gentleness of its people, the brilliance of its children...

Unfortunately, Mother Theresa says nothing. For the truth is that she stands for the most orthodox Christian conservatism. There is no doubt that ultimately Mother Theresa goal is utterly simple: to convert India to Christianity, the only true religion in her eyes. Did you notice that she has never once said a good word about Hinduism, which after all is the religion of 700 millions people of the country she says she loves and has been their religion for 5000 years. This is because deep inside her, Mother Theresa considers, as all good Christians do, particularly the conservatives ones, that Hinduism is a pagan religion which adores a multitude of heathen gods and should be eliminated. Will someone ever have the courage -or the cunning- to make Mother Theresa come out openly with her opinion on Hinduism and the true reasons about why she is in India? For, make no mistake about it, there has been no changes about Christian or Protestant designs on India since they arrived with the Portuguese and the British, remember what Lords Hastings had to say about the Hindus! Mother Theresa is much more clever than Lord Hastings; she knows that on the eve of the 21st century, it would look very bad if she would openly state her true opinions about Hinduism; so she bides her time. But ultimately is not charitable work, whatever it dedication, a roundabout manner to convert people? For without any doubt, most of the people she saves from the streets will ultimately become Christians. And if you ask those " elite " Indians who know her well, such as the photographer Ragu Rai, a great admirer of her, she always comes out

after some years with : " It is now time for you to embrace the true religion ". (Rai politely declined).

The second point then is: why does India intelligentsia, the Vir Sanghvis' and Sunita Sen's, all of whom are born Hindus, defend her? These are intelligent, educated people; they must surely have some inkling of Mother Theresa's true purpose. Or do they ? Do Sanghvi and Sen or Naveen Chawla, Mother Theresa's sycophant biographer, understand what Mother Theresa really stands for ? True, she is may be a great personality doing saintly work. But do they realise that she is someone basically hostile to their culture, their religion, their way of life? Doe Sanghvi know that Hindu society has always been the target of Christians since their coming here? Does he comprehend that he and a thousand of his peers who belong to the intellectual elite of India and keep praising Mother Theresa, are doing harm to their country and opening it to its enemies? The Christian influence is very strong in India today: it shapes in a subtle way the minds of its young people, through its schools , which many of the children of the rich attend. It moulds the thinking of the tribes it has converted, particularly in the north-east, where the missionaries have always covertly encouraged separatism (see the remarkable book " Indigenous Indians " by the Dutch scholar Konrad Elst) But ultimately it must be concluded that the Indian intelligentsia who defend Mother Theresa and are constantly attacking Hinduism, as Sanghvi does, are a product of three centuries of English and Christian, colonisation , which successfully

created an Indian elite cut off from its roots and hostile to its own culture. Mother Theresa is an incarnation of western post-colonialism and the Nobel prize is the endorsement of her work. As for the Indian government's stand on Mother Theresa, it is like biting one's own tail and it seems quite stupid. Why make Mother Theresa a national figure, when she represents today the worst publicity for India, at time when the country is trying to shed her image of poverty and backwardness! Surely Mother Theresa deserves praise for her work, but there are hundreds of other selfless, courageous individuals in India, who do not hog the limelight, but go on quietly with their service to the nation in true Christian humility. The deeds of Mother Theresa should be reviewed in their proper perspective. Today she has officially been replaced as Mother Superior of the Sisters of Charity by Sister Nirmala, a Hindu converted to catholicism (are u getting the message ?). But in reality, even though she is frail and according to her spiritual adviser for 30 years, Father le Jolly, " she does not have her full head any more ", she continues to symbolize for the world the spirit of the Sisters of Charity. And when she dies, the Indian Government will probably declare seven days of mourning!

Chapter 12) : The Threats from Without

It would be bad enough if India had to suffer threats from within only, at the hands of Kashmiri secessionists, at the mercy of the sometimes doubtful allegiance of its 120 million strong Muslim community, under the onslaught of its westernised "elite" minority, or from its missionary contingent. But India is also under attack from without, not only from its Muslim neighbours, who are all offspring of a once Greater India; but also from her non-Muslim neighbours, from China - and even further away, from the West, particularly the USA, who does not always grasp India's problems AND its relevance to Asia and the world.

a) Pakistan

Ah, Pakistan, finally, everything reverts to Pakistan, whether you talk about Kashmir, Ayodhya, Punjab, or the Bombay blasts. Everywhere the Indian Government says it sees the "Pakistani hand" behind it. It is an hostile hand, they add, active, militant, whose ultimate goal is the destruction of India. Is actually, Pakistan the continuing incarnation of those Muslim invaders who raped India from the middle of the 7th century onwards? Militant Hindus contend that nothing has changed: "their cry is still the same: "Dar-ul-Islam", the house of Islam. Yesterday they used scimitars, today they have the atomic bomb; but the purpose is identical, only the weapons have evolved: to conquer India, to finish what the Mughal Emperors were not able to achieve". To reason with Pakistan is useless, they conclude, "for once again they are only

putting in practice what their religion teaches them every day -that 'the Pagans shall burn forever in the fire of hell. They are the meanest of creatures'. Or 'Slay the infidels, wherever ye find them and take them captive and besiege them and prepare them for all kinds of ambush'. Or again: 'Choose not thy friends among the Infidels till they forsake their homes and the way of idolatry. If they return to paganism then take them whenever you find them and kill them'. All these quotations are taken from the Koran and are read everyday to the faithful by their mollahs.(Koran 98:51-9:5-4:89)

Is Pakistan's war against India then a Muslim "jihad", the ultimate jihad against the Infidel, which if necessary will utilise the ultimate weapon, nuclear bombs? And as in the case of Ayodhya, the whole of Islam might side with Pakistan, for to their eyes India is still the Infidel, the Idolater, which the Koran asks them to slay. Says Elst: "if tomorrow the Pakistani start the Prophet's first nuclear war against an Infidel country (India), a billion Muslims will feel compelled to side with this muhajid struggle and dissenters will be careful not to protest aloud."

But then you also have to understand the Pakistani point of view: take Kashmir for instance. If one goes by the logic of Partition, then at least the Kashmir valley, which is in great majority Muslim, (and it should be emphasised that for long the Hindus in Kashmir exploited and dominated the Muslims -who are getting back at them today), should have reverted to Pakistan.

It should be clear also that Pakistan never forgot the humiliating loss of Bangladesh at the hands of India, although India only helped Bangladesh to gain its freedom in the face of what the Bangladeshis say was Pakistani genocide. Zia's emergence was a result of that humiliation and the whole policy of proxy war by supporting the separatist movements in Punjab and Kashmir, is a way of getting back at India. And the same can be said about the nuclear bomb, for Pakistan has realised, after having lost three wars, that both numerically and strategically, it can never beat India in a conventional conflict. It is also clear when one goes to Pakistan today, that the country has evolved a soul of its own, has its individual identity and that in fact they have been able to do better than India in many fields. Their politicians are more accessible than in India for instance; their bureaucrats more friendly; and PIA is definitely a better airlines than Indian Airlines ! Finally, can Pakistanis be accused of all ills that befall India ? The Indian Press has become possessed of total paranoia when it comes to Pakistan and Kashmir, always pointing a finger at its neighbour. But many of India's probelms are of her own making. The Pakistani press is also often more balanced than in India. In Karachi, when two American diplomats were killed in March 95, the Sind Chief Minister hinted darkly at a " foreign hand ", meaning India. But not so the Karachi Press, which talked freely about the possible suspects, that is the MQM haqiqi, or the drug Mafia.

Thus, Indians can cry themselves hoarse about Pakistani treachery and see the evil hand of Islamabad

everywhere, even sometimes behind events where Pak is not involved. But then the Indian Government should only blame themselves. For have they not recognised at independence the geographical and political reality of Partition and have they not continued to do so up to now? Is there any political leader in India who dares say today that India and Pakistan are ONE? Is there any voice to proclaim the truth in a loud and clear voice, as Sri Aurobindo did in 1947: "But the old communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent division of the country. It is hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled, or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible; possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. THE PARTITION OF THE COUNTRY MUST GO"... The menace from within cannot be tackled unless the menace from without is solved. India and Pakistan (+ Bangladesh) are ONE. And as long as Partition remains, India will not be able to live in peace: Ayodhya, Kashmir, Bangladeshi infiltration and a potential (nuclear?) war with Pakistan, are always possible.

b) The Other Neighbours

How is it that India is almost universally disliked, sometimes even hated by her neighbours, whether they are Muslim Bangladeshis, Buddhist Sri Lankans, or even Hindu Nepalese? Journalists, both in South Asia, as well

as in India, are fond of saying that it is because India is a great bully, hegemonistic in her tendencies. The present Prime Minister of India seems to agree with them : he is best known for his " Gujral doctrine ", which could be summed-up in six words: " give without expexting anything in return ". In the name of this doctrine, Mr Gujral as Minister of External Affairs of the Gowda Governement, gave Bangladesh an extra share of the Ganges water, when India does not have enough for herself; and liberalised visa applications for Pakistanis wanting to visit India - which Islamabad did not reciprocate.

Is then India a great bully? At least in her past history, she has never shown any hegemonistic inclinations, her religion never tried to convert anybody and her armies never marched into other countries -the same cannot be said about Islam, or Christianity with her Crusades, or even the more peaceful Buddhist missionaries... Yet at one time India's influence, solely due to the sheer greatness of her culture and Hindu dharma, extended as far as China on one side and the Mecca on the other. Even today, whether in Thailand, Mauritius, Cambodia, or even Bangladesh and Pakistan, there is a tremendous leftover of India's predominance.

The key word must be fear. All these countries are afraid of India, not entirely because she is a great bully, but because they unconsciously realise that they all sprang from India's vast bosom- and that one day, sooner or later, they might very well all return to that bosom, under whatever form. Nepal is a very good

example of that India-hate syndrome. Here is a wonderful country, with simple and friendly people, which is the only Hindu nation in the world, which is so similar in many ways to India, that there is no reason to be antagonistic to a country with which they have so much in common. Yet the king has often been able to play a divide and rule game by using the Chinese and blaming India for all the ills of Nepal. The same goes for Bangladesh. Bangladeshis, it is often said, are Bangladeshis first and Muslims second; this is why they separated from Pakistan, where they were treated as second-class citizens. And in truth, Bangladeshis are a marvelous race, affectionate as all Bengalis, poetic, humorous. Their society used to be - and still is in many ways - one of the most open and tolerant in the world of Islam, which gives its women a unique place. Yet President Ershad was able to islamize in a radical way this nation which stood proud of its secular history. Yet every time there is a flood, the Bangladeshis blame India and not the corruption of their own Government and their habit of living-off the formidable funds they constantly get from Aid agencies. Yet, a Taslima Nasreen, whatever her personal failings (love of publicity, inflated ego, unnecessary shocking of Islamic feelings), when she dares in her book " Laljja ", to utter the truth about the atrocities perpetrated on Hindus after the destruction of the Ayodhya mosque, is hunted down by obscure fundamentalists groups, let down by her government, betrayed by her own people.

Same phenomenon in Sri Lanka. Extraordinary country that erstwhile Ceylon; God gave it everything:

extraordinary climate, lush country, incredible diversity of races and religions, an easy-going and friendly people, who even welcomed its invaders. Yet the hate that the Sinhalese have for Indians is something to be seen to be believed. Again it is a hate which is fostered by their political leaders: the late President Premadasa had become a great adept at using the hate-India carrot every time he got in trouble. He also tried to utilise too many times the LTTE, sometimes killing them, sometimes wooing them- and got assassinated in the process. And why should India be blamed for Sri Lanka's ills? The Sri Lankans can go on accusing Mrs Gandhi's of having abetted Tamil Militants in the late seventies. But was it Mrs Gandhi who discriminated for 40 years against the Tamil minority of Sri Lanka? Was it Mrs Gandhi who regularly prodded Sinhalese crowds to indulge in pogroms against the Tamils, thereby building-up a wall of hatred, so that today the Tamils in Sri Lanka cannot trust the Sinhalese anymore and want nothing but total independence? Why blame India for Sri Lanka's problems, a nation, who thanks to the lack of foresight of three generations of Sinhalese politicians, produces nothing today but tea -and that even at the mercy of its Tamil workers imported by the British - and lives on a tourist industry which in turn is at the mercy of civil war?

India has also to account for the hostility of the Gulf countries. And very unfortunately, India's hands are bound, because of its millions of nationals, most of them Muslims, who work in the Gulf and regularly send home precious foreign exchange. But does India realise

that this foreign exchange is sometimes a poisoned gift, that these Indian Muslims often bring home a more militant Islam? The Bombay blasts which followed the destruction of the Babri Masjid, were the perfect example of that threat to India from the Gulf countries: not only did the Indian Muslims who were the hands that executed, receive training arms and financing from Pakistan, but some of the Gulf countries must have had a prior knowledge of them. The fact that the perpetrators were able to transit through two of these Gulf countries after their deed is proof enough: the police of these countries are everywhere and are totalitarian tools to the monarchies; they must have known when the Memons entered the country and exactly where they were staying. It would have been a simple matter to stop them from leaving both the countries till an extradition was officially asked for. Yet they chose to let them go and now " Tiger " Memon has gone into hiding in Pakistan and India will probably never see him again and solve the mystery of the Bombay blasts. Why did Dubai and Jeddah let him go? And why did the Indian Government did nothing to prevent it?

One has to understand the Arab psyche: by destroying the Ayodhya mosque, it is the whole Muslim world which secretly or overtly has felt insulted and humiliated. Furthermore, none of the Gulf countries have forgotten India's support to Iraq during the Gulf war. IS IT POSSIBLE THEN THAT IT WAS DECIDED TO TEACH INDIA A LESSON? That Pakistan and "some" other Muslim countries funded and planned, or at least

knew in advance, of the bombings attempts, of which Bombay was supposed to be only the first of a series? Is this a warning of the Muslim word to Hindu India? But who are the fundamentalists? Who are the murderers? Who are the Nazis? Who are the Hitlers?

c) China

It is the infamous 1972 "historical trip" of Richard Nixon to Peking which set the trend: henceforth, the West was gradually going to put all its chips on the Chinese, banking that one day, its investments, political and economical, will bring enormous returns. In the process, the West conveniently forgot that the Chinese had killed 1,2 million Tibetans, one of the worst genocides of humanity (*). Tianamen, showed again openly the totalitarian face of Chinese communism, but the United States preferred to forget it as fast as possible. The Chinese, clever as they are, make from time to time a few Human Right concessions here and there, such as releasing a handful of dissident student leaders (who by the way, have never raised their voices against the Tibetan genocide), and at the same time they harden their tone. Washington I pretends to be satisfied and gives again the green light to its army of businessmen, waiting impatiently to place their green dollars in the huge Chinese slot machine.

But is the West ready to pay the price for that impatience? Because finally, economical liberalisation or not, China remains a communist country with a dictatorial leadership, probably the only one worth that name left in the world. And communism means

instability, as the sudden crumbling of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, has recently proved. What is going to happen to the billions of dollars of Western investment, if there is tomorrow a counter-revolution in China -or if communism shows again its true totalitarian face? And indeed, after the death of Deng, the first signs of the crumbling of the Chinese edifice, were the bomb blasts engineered by Muslim separatists in the province of Zinkiang. But the ultimate test will be the transfer of Hong-Kong in July 97. Either its democratic spirit will spread to China, or Beijing will have to clamp down on its civil liberties. China's true " asuric " aspect will then be exposed. And maybe the industrialized world'sts attention will then shift to India, the " other giant " in Asia, which has shown true democracy in its fifty years of independence.

India, which is ever ready to close its doors to her potential friends, such as Israel, with whom she partakes so many similarities (problems with a Muslim minority, ecological hurdles, nuclear threats), has always been duped by China. Take Tibet for instance. Since 1950, when the Chinese invaded this wonderful, peace loving nation, which boasted the highest spiritualised society in the world (although quite feudal), 1,2 million Tibetans have been killed, either directly: shooting, death squads, torture - or indirectly: concentration camps, prison, or famines. 6254 monasteries, most of them ancient, have been razed to the ground. 60% of religious, historical and cultural archives have been destroyed. A quarter million Chinese troops are occupying Tibet. One Tibetan out of

ten is still in jail. There are today In Tibet 7,5 million Chinese settlers for six million Tibetans- in many places such as the capital, Lhassa, Tibetans are outnumbered two to one... Do you think these statistics come from the Tibetans themselves? No at all. They are part of Resolution Number 63, adopted by the United States Congress on the 16th May 1989 and they have been substantiated by the American Secret Services. And do you know why China is ready to pay such a heavy price for Tibet, both in terms of the tremendous cost of keeping an occupation army and the harm done to its international image? The answer is simple: China has transferred one third of its nuclear arsenal to Nagchuka, 25O kms away from Lhassa, a region full of huge caves, which the Chinese have linked together by an intricate underground network and where they have placed installed, according to American Intelligence estimates, 90 Intermediate Intercontinental Ballistic Missiles... There are two reasons to it: The first is that this part of Tibet is always covered by a thick blanket of clouds, which makes it extremely difficult for the spy satellites. And the second and most important, is that Tibet is of a great strategic military importance to China, because being on a high plateau, it overlooks...Who? Russia and India! But Russia's back is broken and it is no more a danger to China and it is thus towards North Indian cities that most of the nuclear missiles are pointed. This raises several important questions. India in her generosity, (through Jawarlhal Nehru), welcomed the Dalaï-Lama and his followers in 1959 and allowed them to settle in Dharamsala, where thanks to their spiritual leader's

guidance, the Tibetans were able to recreate a small Tibet, complete with Government in exile, schools, monasteries, Tibetan medicine and arts. It is actually the only real thing that is left of Tibetan culture and civilisation today -and if ever the Tibetans recuperate Tibet, it will have to be re-transplanted to what has become a near completely Chinese Tibet. But the Chinese have never forgiven India (see chapter on Nehru) for their generosity and compassion towards the Tibetans. And although since Rajiv went to Peking, later followed by Narashima Rao, some progress has been made, the question remains: can Indians trust the Chinese?

There are two superpowers in the making in Asia: India and China. The West, seems to have lost the absolute predominance it used to enjoy and with its slow decline, it will drag in recession many of the so-called tigers of Asia, which vitally need US and Western political support for the growth of their economy: the Koreas, Singapore, Thailand, or Taiwan and Hong-Kong, which will be swallowed back by China. And ultimately India and China will be the only superpowers left with Japan in their shadow. But one will be a democratic country, and the other still be a communist dictatorship, with a formidable military arsenal -nuclear and otherwise- at her disposal for her greedy appetite. China seems to be the direct adversary of India, both economically and militarily -and not Pakistan as the Indian Government wants its citizens to believe.

d) The West

And finally no chapter on the threat to India from without, can be complete without a mention of the threat from the Western world, particularly the United States, which seems sometimes to unconsciously wish a divided and weakened India. And did not Senator Galbraith say after the exploding of Yugoslavia that "India is next"? Actually it makes sense to view that external threat by making a parallel, say between Palestine and Kashmir, or even Yugoslavia and India, as both have been equated. For make no mistake about it: the tears that the West is shedding on Bosnia and on the ethnic cleansing of Muslims are crocodile tears. What the West wanted first was the complete destruction of a unified Yugoslavia, which was one of the most enlightened communist countries and to break the back of the Serbs, who alone have a sense of identity and history and who have retained some of their communist commitments- their greatest sin in the eyes of the US. As for Palestine, it is the perfect example of how Arab negationism and clever propaganda, instilled both fear and pity to the West and have succeeded to hide the fact that the Jews have also a right to be in Palestine and that 6 million of them have been killed in cold blood by Hitler, a truth that Arabs deny as "Zionist propaganda", witness the many Islamic countries who have banned Schindler's list.

e) THE SPLITTING OF INDIA IN THE LIGHT OF BOSNIA , PALESTINE AND IRAQ

The massacre in 1994 of 40 Palestinians while praying in their mosque, was indeed terrible and should be condemned from every quarter for its atrocity. The international media gave it a wide, near absolute coverage for days altogether, which is proper, considering the grave political implications it had and the immensity of the human tragedy. The Arab world was quick to show its indignation and anger. Right again; after all, these people were murdered by a fanatic while praying to Allah, the universal God of all Muslims. The Palestinians were equally swift in their reaction: cutting-off all negotiations with the Israelis and demanding stringent conditions for the resuming of talks, including proper protection for all Palestinians. Correct again. Everyone thus responded in the proportion demanded by the inhumanity of the deed and the whole Western world, although its affinities, political or ethnical, would tend to rest more with the Israelis, showed its indignation at a gross violation of a basic Human Right, that to practice one's religion without being shot at by terrorists.

Quite right, say many Indians, terrible indeed. But what about us? Did anyone in the world raise a little finger when whole bus loads of Hindus were massacred in cold-blood in Punjab and recently in Kashmir? Did the international press vent its indignation when Bombay was shattered by Muslim bombs in 1992? Did the West take notice of the murdering of Kashmiri Pandits in Kashmir, resulting in the entire community

fleeing their 5000 year old homeland? Did the political leaders of the earth react to the hounding out by Afghan fundamentalists of 50.000 Hindus and Sikhs, who had made this country their own for several generations? (Remember how for months the international media covered the handful of Palestinians chased in no-man's land by the Israelis?). Did the Islamic world ever apologise for the hundreds of Hindu temples razed to the ground in Bangladesh and Pakistan after the destroying of a single mosque in Ayodhya ? Indians seems to have a point there. And they have another valid question: why do the Palestinians get so much mileage, so much world coverage, so much international empathy for a single event, however outrageous it is? And why do we get hardly any sympathy for our plight, certainly a hundred times worse -at least in sheer numbers. Not only that, they could add, but also, O supreme irony, we even get censored at the hands of the international community for our human record, which is certainly better than that of most of the Arab countries crying themselves hoarse about the repression and genocide in India !

Looking at the second event, that of Bosnia, we find again that the international community's outrage is totally justified. Here are innocent people, particularly in Sarajevo, who happen to be Muslims, who are massacred in an apparent wilful campaign of ethnic cleansing by the Serbs. Is not then the unconditional support of the Western world fully valid, even if they risk, by this active, semi-military involvement, to be dragged into a war for the Balkans, as they were 80

years ago? And is it not also absolutely right for the body of the United Nations to help carve an independent state, where Bosnian Muslims will be at peace, protected from the genocide tendencies of the Serbs and free to express their own religious identity ? But then, the same type of reasoning, the same pattern is sought to be applied to Kashmir, and eventually it will also be applied to Assam and Mizoram, thanks to their Christian missionaries: is it not just also, that the international community should pressurise India to give Kashmiris their freedom of self-determination, so that they can be protected from Indian genocide and the Hindus' cultural grip?

In these two above-mentioned international events, the world only looks at the consequences, the immediate, the present, the superficial, without caring to dig at the roots, to examine the past to have a better understanding of the present. For example, does anyone care to remember that the Muslims of Bosnia belong to the same ethnic stock as their Serbian brothers and that they were once converted, probably forcibly, by the Turks in 1463 ? Does anybody care to remember, that in the same way, Kashmiris were almost entirely Hindus or Buddhists, before they were forcibly converted by invading Arabs four centuries ago? True, today these Muslims, whether in Bosnia, or Kashmir, have not only accepted as their own a religion which their ancestors had hated, but they have also often taken-up the strident cry of Islam.

And finally, the double standards of the West condemn India in Kashmir, when not so long ago they were the great colonisers, the great plunderers of the Third World, where they left an utter mess? When even today the British to retain the Falkland islands, thousands of miles away from Great Britain, fought a war and killed innocent Argentineans in the process. If the United States can invade Panama because it feels its interests are threatened there, if France battles to keep Corsica in its fold, an island which could as well belong to Italy, why should not India retain what has been hers for 5000 years? The Indian army is fighting a guerrilla war in Kashmir, and there are bound to be casualties on both sides. So what? The world did not shed a tear about the 100.000 Iraqi soldiers killed during the Gulf war, many of them fleeing the allied forces.

The Gulf war was also a perfect symbol of this new Western Crusade, of which the UN has become the willing and submissive tool. The West and particularly the United States, have set certain moral, Human Right, democratic standards, which should be applicable only to themselves and are seeking through the UN forces to implement these standards. But in Kuwait, the US and its allies, only went in to protect their selfish oil interests, which are vital to the continuity of western domination on the world. Kuwait is a non-democratic, feudal, fundamentalist monarchy, compared to which Iraq is a very enlightened, secular and modern nation, notwithstanding Saddam Husain. Was it necessary to kill a hundred thousand human lives, just to get at that

one man, however monstruous he may be? And will tomorrow the US use the UN forces in Kashmir, as in Bosnia, or Somalia?

India should learn a few lessons from the Chinese, who, whatever their faults, take no nonsense from the world and just plod on steadily on the course they have chartered for themselves. India is one of the oldest and proudest civilisations of this earth and they have nothing to be ashamed of. Let India stand up and protect herself both from internal as well as external threats, with determination and confidence.

f) The Nuclear option

Should India (and does) India have the atomic bomb ? Should India freeze her Integrated Missile Programme, under the pressure of the United States (as she seems to have already partially done) ? Will Narashima Rao be remembered in history as the Prime Minister who scrapped India's potential nuclear power and delivery clout ? All weapons of war are a perversion of man's greed and the ultimate attribute of the misuse he has achieved over matter. Thus, ideally, they should all be banned, or else slowly phased out until we all live in a weaponless world, for the simple reason that they would not be needed anymore and that man would have outgrown their folly. So more than anything, the atom bomb symbolises that folly, because at a single stroke, at the simple push of one button by a misguided hand, or though the order of a mad leader, thousands of lives can be obliterated in a single second, entire cities be wiped out in a single flash. The film, The Day

After, has given us an inkling of that terror, a glimpse of that horror. The atom Bomb also demonstrates the limit of man's command over matter. For what use is that material mastery to man, when he has no control over his impulses, when he is still unable not only to love his human brothers, but even to reason with himself not to use his domination over matter to harm others. And ultimately, his might may slip out of his hands, because material mastery without inner control is incomplete and dangerous. For this and many other reasons, should not India then voluntarily forsake nuclear power and cap its missile programme and become a true non-violent country, in the spirit of the Mahatma Gandhi ?

But have those who are pushing this theory forward read properly the Baghvad Gita ? For once more, what does the Baghavad tell us ? It does not say, as Christians do, or as the Mahatma purported, that all violence is wrong. It asserts that when violence is absolutely necessary, when it is used for defending one's country, one's wife, brothers, sisters, then it becomes Dharma -duty- and is acceptable, as long as it is done with the right attitude in one's heart. India, as we have just seen, is facing multiple threats from without by hostile nations, armed with both conventional and atomic weapons. The Islamic bomb, assembled by Pakistan with Arab financing, is the first one of these. The other nuclear threat India is facing is coming from China. Nehru's policy of " Hindi-Chini-bhai-bhai " was a disaster: China attacked India by surprise and took away 20.000 square kilometres of her

territory. And today India is still making the same mistake of trusting the Chinese. It recognises the Chinese claim on Tibet, a wholly independent country which the Chinese have raped since 1950, killing 1,2 million of its peaceful, adorable people. But in doing so, it ignores that Tibet is the perfect buffer zone between herself and China. New Delhi's policy will backfire, because sooner or later India's Kashmir will be compared with Tibet, when there is no comparison at all, as Kashmir has been India's for 5000 years and the Indians have not killed one million Kashmiris. And finally, the Indian Government must be knowing that China has transferred one third of its nuclear arsenal to the Tibetan plateau and that most of the Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile are pointed towards the North Indian cities. It is an official report from the CIA, which has been quoted numerous times by the American Senate. How can then the India Government think of freezing, or worse cancelling the Agni programme for instance, the only weapon which can answer in kind to China's own IRBM ? At a time when China is still claiming Arunachal Pradesh and India and China are fast becoming the two main competitors in Asia ? For this and many other reasons, India should keep its nuclear option opened, in spite of the increasing pressure from the West, particularly the United States. India needs again Kshatriyas to defend herself, not businessmen, or intellectuals who will sell down their country' security for a few more million dollars investments and a pat on the back from Uncle Sam.

It is to be hoped that India will realise that surrendering to America's pressure would jeopardise her unity and open her for dismemberment. For her nuclear and missile programmes are not meant for aggression -once again in her 7000 year history, India was never an aggressor- but as a deterrent to protect herself, to show her enemies that she means business and that she will retaliate in case of first attack. It is a sad reality of the world today, and India has got to take it in consideration. Let India be strong, powerful, nuclear even, but as dharma, because it is her duty to protect her children.

Chapter 13) : " The Horror that is India "

Indians cannot solely blame internal and external threats for their country's ills. For today, the Wonder that was India has become perverted at the hands of Indian themselves. India seems to have forgotten its eternal truth; Indians appear to be constantly turning their back to the 5000 year old soul of their nation; and India, on the eve of the 21st century, sometimes looks as if it has become an impossible riddle, where corruption, overpopulation, poverty, ugliness, bureaucracy, crass materialism will have the last word. Thus, it feels sometimes as if the wonder that is India, has become " the Horror that is India ". If one were to pick up three domains of today's Indian horror, then certainly politicians, people and ecology would be the ones.

a) Politicians

" Spirituality is India's only politics, the fulfilment of Sanatana Dharma its only Swaraj. ", wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1911 (India's rebirth,89). In the old times, princes and kings were Kshatriyas, their duty was to serve the nation and high ideals were held in front of them by the Brahmins and rishis who advised them. The Buddha's father for instance, was a king elected by its own people Yet what has happened to Indian politicians ? Today we see corrupt, inefficient men, who have lost track of the good of the nation they are supposed to serve, who are only interested in minting

the maximum money in the minimum time. Nowadays, Indian politicians have often become a caricature, which is made fun of by the whole country. They are frequently uneducated, gross people, elected on the strength of demagogic pledges, such as promising rice for 2RS a kilo, a folly which is draining the state's coffers, or of playing Muslims against Hindus, Harijans against Brahmins, as in UP and Bihar. Politicians in India (and often elsewhere), are most of the time ignorant; Ministers have customarily no idea about the department they are overseeing. It is the civil servants who control matters, who know their subject thoroughly. You have to work hard to become a civil servant , study, pass exams, then slowly climb up the hierarchy, hereby gaining experience. The politician just jumps from being a lowly clerk, or some uneducated zamindar to become a powerful Minister, lording over much more educated men. There should be also exams to become a politician (but what if they are rigged like in UP !); a minimum of knowledge and skills should be required of the man who says he wants to serve the nation (but it must be said that in France for instance, where all politicians come from fancy schools, there is also corruption). Of course, they are exceptions: men of talent and integrity, who strive to serve India to the best of their abilities, who are technocrats first and politicians second. Mr Manmohan Singh is of course such a man, whether one agrees or disagrees with his brand of economics. India should adapt a Presidential system, where the President can chose his Ministers, who will not be necessarily MP's. And what about the habit of Indian politicians of declaring holidays at the

drop of the hat ? The seven days mourning for the death of Moraji Desai, a man who after all lived a full hundred years, who was universally hated by the Congress, for betraying Indira Gandhi, and who did not achieve much during his short tenure, cost the nation thousands of crores, when she could ill afford it. India must be the place in the world where there are the most samadhis, where each year, time and money are wasted to celebrate the death anniversaries of people which have been completely forgotten and who often did not achieve anything worthwhile in their lifetimes. 5 minutes of silence in all offices should be enough to pay respect to the memory of any important figure who dies. India is probably the place where there are the most holidays, legal and otherwise. In Madhya Pradesh for example, it has been calculated that there are more leave days (holidays, strikes, bandhs, leave), than working days !

There is also nothing which symbolises better the degeneration of Indian politicians than the VIP syndrome. The protection that most politicians enjoy today, stems from a genuine concern; it was born out of the trauma of seeing Indira Gandhi killed by her own bodyguards; it sprang from a sincere desire to protect future Indian VIP's from such a fate... But it still must be said that once again perversion has taken over, that man the political animal has misused what was in the beginning a genuine movement. And the result today in India, is that the smallest VIP has to have his three black cats around him, for it has become a symbol of status. Tremendous amounts of money are spent on

security, untold miseries thrown at the hapless Indian citizen, who has to stand for ages in traffic when some VIP convoy is passing by, who is made to wait for hours inside his plane while a VIP's plane is coming in. Today the VIP security syndrome is like a many-headed monster which is eating at India's entrails, it is an asuric force which is doing exactly the opposite of what it should do, as it is catering to a few elite persons at the detriment of India's people. This monster, for the benefit of a few individuals, makes everybody suffer, bleeds the nation's coffers and makes a mockery of democracy. Mr Rao must be today the highest protected head of state in the world. Even the Swiss laughed, when Indian security asked them to close to traffic the entire highway from Zurich airport to Davos where the PM went a few years back for an economic meet; " we don't even do that for the President of the United States ", they told them. Yet in India, nobody finds anything to say to that practice. When Mr Rao went to Punjab, in April 95, there were one hundred thousand policemen to protect him ! In fact, the Indian police themselves will tell you that 70% of their time is spent on VIP protection...And what about his other habit of chartering a full jumbo jet from Air India for his travels abroad? And when a technical snag occurs, the Prime Minister finds it quite normal to requisition another one on the spot, throwing into disarray hundreds of passengers, including many foreigners, as Air India's planes have a round the clock schedule. Cannot the Prime Minister have his own plane, even if its is more modest than a Jumbo jet? Why does he need a 400 seater plane anyway ? India after all is a

poor country. (The last Prime Minister of India, Mr Gowda, who lasted only eight months, managed nevertheless to take along his entire family on several " official " trips). True, after the murders of Indira Gandhi, and Rajiv Gandhi, the combined threats of Sikh, Kashmir and LTTE separatism, all precautions should be taken for his protection. But generally, the leaders of India know about karma, fate, reincarnation and the laws of dharma. Do they not believe then like all good Hindus, that death is preordained, that no matter how many precautions you have taken, Yama will come anyway if it has been fated ? Why does India have to always ape the West who has no such knowledge and just thinks that life is a one way shot, with heaven or hell as its reward. One understands Mrs Jayalitha's concerns about her own security, after all, she was instrumental in clamping down on the LTTE's presence in Tamil Nadu and it was very courageous of her. After all, she saw Rajiv Gandhi blown away in such an horrifying manner. But her own security has gone to extremes and is inflicting tremendous trouble on the ordinary man. When she goes to the Madras airport, the road is blocked for hours. Recently, when all her Ministers travelled to Madurai for that World Tamil conference which should have been called the beatification of Jayalitha, traffic was diverted all along the road and a policeman posted nearly 100 meters. The newspapers even talked of a thousand car convoy in 1993. Can you imagine how much manpower and cost to the state did that incur? Without speaking of the fact that the threat of the LTTE has been used by her sycophants for clamping on political opponents and

asserting their own power. Even flying of motorised microlight has been banned over Madras for fear that someone will drop a bomb on her house ! India is the land of wisdom and spirituality, the land of knowledge; and some common sense has to prevail. How can it be that all ministers have each five black cats? Security has to be withdrawn from all VIP's, except for the very few top people who are known to be specifically targeted. And even for those, such as Mr Rao or Mrs Jalaylitha, it has to be reduced to human proportions, keeping in mind the trouble incurred to the common man and the cost to the nation. Because after all these politicians were elected by that very common man to protect his interests!

One should also say a word about Sonia Gandhi. Extraordinary dignity, when her husband died such an appalling death. And what a grief she must have gone through in her heart; thus, she deserves the nation's sympathy and gratitude. It is also a wonderful idea to use the goodwill her husband's name still generates to promote arts or to help disabled children. But what game is Sonia playing? She should once and for all come out with an irrevocable statement that she is not interested in politics and that she will not enter that field. Let her daughter show later if she has inherited the mantle of her grandmother. Instead Sonia is letting Congress politicians use her for their own selfish purpose when they are clamouring that she becomes the party president, thereby opening the door for an Italian lady, who although, she speaks very good Hindi and dresses as an Indian, has very little political

experience and appears to be in ignorance of India's true inner greatness. Does anyone know Sonia Gandhi's opinions about Mother Theresa, about he role of Christian missionaries in India and what she really thinks of Hinduism? It would be interesting to take cognizance these before entrusting her with any political role. And also this Janpath house business, with its dozens of security guards at all time of the day and night, its sycophants and secrecy, has become a joke. It has turned into a centre of power and even some Congress Prime Ministers have been known to run there to justify their actions. Let Mrs Gandhi enjoy a quiet house with a minimum of security for her children and let her withdraw from public view and quietly go on with her work.

And finally one has to quote again from the great Avatar of our era: " I have no doubt we shall have to go through our Parliamentary period in order to get rid of the notion of western democracy, by seeing in practice how helpless it is to make nations blessed... It is only when this foolishness is done with, that truth will have a chance to emerge and a really strong spiritual movement begin as a prelude to India's regeneration... " (India's rebirth, P.89) And truly, India will get rid of her corrupt politicians; only when she accepts that she made a mistake by adapting blindly all the political structures which the British had put in place to govern this country; it is only when India starts experimenting with her own ancient systems, which have been adapted to today's problems, that an efficient and honest government will spring from her bosom, ready

to do service to Mother India, in the old Kshatryia spirit. It is only when India will see through the shortcomings of democracy, that she will get rid of the bureaucrats (*) who are eating up her entrails.

b) People

Individually, Indian are the most wonderful people in the world: full of hospitality, gentleness, innate spirituality. But whatever happened to the collective consciousness of the nation ? The gap between the very rich and the extremely poor is constantly widening nowadays, thanks in part to the economic liberalisation. If only the very fortunate would care for their less flourishing brethren. But it needs Mother Theresas' and books like the City of Joy to remind us that the dirty work in India cannot be done by its own people. This widening gap, this sickening unconcern about the other, was most evident during the plague of 94. This plague was actually a boon, a divine warning; because what did it show us ? That in the Malabar Hill district in Bombay, which has become the most expensive Real Estate property per square foot in the world (yes, even before Tokyo), people were still dumping their garbage on the street, without a second thought. That next to Malabar, there lies one of the worst slums of Bombay and that none of privileged who live in Malabar had a thought for them during the plague. That in Surat, one of the richest cities of India, thanks to the diamond trade, its citizens let the most filthiest filth accumulate, without thinking twice what it will do to those who live near it. That India is a vast dump of garbage. Not

because it is too poor to process it and store it properly, BUT BECAUSE IT DOES NOT CARE, BECAUSE THE TAMAS IN THIS COUNTRY IS SO VAST, SO DEEPLY INGRAINED IN THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS, THAT NOBODY GIVES A DAMN FOR THE OTHER. Probably the best instance of that indifference, was a man chose to marry his son aboard an Air India plane, for lakhs a rupees, a shameful act, when India was losing because of the plague billion of dollars in cancelled tourist groups and industrial contracts. And did India learn anything from the plague ? Unfortunately, the answer is no. The country is still as filthy, everything is back as before (even in Surat) and Indians have not understood that the wealth of the country has to be shared to avoid a human, social and ecological catastrophe.

Indians show also very little civic sense in other domains of their life. Look how they drive. Truck and bus drivers in India, routinely overtake in curves endangering not only their passengers' lives, but also those of incoming traffic. They park most of the time in the middle of the road when they have to stop, without any concern for those who are coming behind They drive us deaf with their constant blaring horns and generally have a total disregard for the others. And does not the way one drive, show a nation's vital soul? When an Israeli, who said that everything happens in his country with guts, asked his Indian counterpart how it was done in India, he was told: with luck ! And it is true that there is some divine grace in India, borne out of the centuries of tapasaya o its yogis, to reach safely

on its roads from one point to an other. And the bus driver who overtakes in the curve, must be unconsciously knowing it... Look also how Indians are in the habit of pushing other people, whether it is to enter a plane, or exit a cinema. Or how they so innocently ignore those who have been queuing for hours at some railway counter, by jumping at the head of the queue. And it is not only the poor, but also the rich, who have this habit, witness the checking in at airports. Dishonesty is also a lack of collective discipline. Glimpse how the Indian man is often cheating, whether it is the cement which is mixed with ashes, the change not tendered exactly, or the rich man who swindles the Income tax, by keeping lakhs of black money, gold and jewels in his house, when he could very well afford to pay a little more taxes and put his money in his bank? It is said like this that one third of India's wealth is in the black. For make no mistakes, India is a wealthy country. The poverty is only there because of the mismanagement, the dishonesty, the tamas and the inheritance of wrong structures. For Indians must be with the Jews the best savers in the world. And they don't save in abstract concepts: they go in for solid gold, land, cash - and that from the little shopkeeper to the business magnate. Where is all this money going? Again lack of discipline, lack of concern for the nation, disregard for what one's egoism will do to the country.

And finally, another area where India has miserably failed is Sports. One sees the energy of a nation in sports. And what happened in India ? It

thrives in sports inherited from the British, such as cricket, which is totally unsuited for Indian climates. And it neglects its ancient sports such as kalaripayat, the ancestor of all great Asian martial arts, and one of the most wonderful and comprehensive sports in the world, which is still practised to day in Kerala (see chapter 14). Furthermore Indians do not have the discipline to practice hard, they lack the drive to excel and the determination to win, again Tamas.

c) Is India heading towards ecological disaster ?

All right: India is going to overcome its colossal indiscipline, her people will rise, her politicians will change; she will also last through all internal and external threats. Thus, whatever foreigners and India's own "secular" Indians say, the land of Bharat, the cradle of the mighty Vedas, the Mother of so many saints, poets, great artists, philosophers, revolutionaries, will survive. After all, it has already come through the unspeakable barbarism of countless Muslim invaders, the soul-stifling British colonial rule - and 40 years of "secular" socialism.

But then what? For what? By the middle of next century there will be no more forests cover left in India. Its population will have long crossed the billion mark and will overflow everywhere, stifling any progress, annihilating all efforts. India's cities will be so polluted by their millions of cars that it will be impossible to breathe any more. India's rivers will be so poisoned by industries, that all living life will long have disappeared from it. There will be no drinking water left, except

imported mineral water. And India will be littered with so much plastic (bags, bottles, buckets, etc.), that it will be materially impossible to ever get rid of them (indeed the land of Bharat should be renamed " the civilisation of plastic "...) This is 21st century India for you.

Dr M.S. Swaminathan for instance, the internationally-acclaimed farm scientist, has painted a bleak picture of India's ecology today. He points out that hardly 11% of India's classified forests have adequate density (in 1950, 1/3 of India's area was still forested; each year India loses through deforesting a territory bigger than France, that is nearly two million hectares). And of these, he says, only 3% is protected... And even that 3% he adds, is in deep distress, because of population pressure, big dams (like the Narmada), and industries. Dr Virendra Kumar, Director Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies of Mountain Environment, New Delhi, says that the main culprits of the deforestation are the contractors, the ones with big money, particularly the saw mill owners. He adds that the Forest Department, although it claims that it does selective tree felling, has absolutely no understanding of ecological balance. Dr Kumar cites the case of the Himalayan Yew, a rare tree, whose bark has anti-cancer properties. Its cutting has been banned in the United States; so the American pharmaceutical companies have turned towards India and started chopping these trees on a massive scale.

But all these scientists, maybe because they depend on government grants for their functioning, are mild in their words. For without doubt, the greatest culprits of the massive deforestation, the dwindling of animal life, the thinning of underwater tables and the increasing desertification of India, are again the work of politicians, in connivance with the contractors, who in turn bribe the forest officers, witness how Veerapan was able to plunder the forests of Tamil Nadu and Karnataka for ten years. The Konkan railway, the Narmada Dam, or the planned beach resort in Puri, Orissa, (for which 25000 acres of forest, holding the sand dunes will have to be cut), the increase of the prawn farms, are all examples of these criminal wrongdoing. And unfortunately, (bare for Mrs Gandhi, who was the only Green Prime Minister India ever had, and Maneka Gandhi, who was its best Environment Minister -and should be reinstated immediately by any government in power, be it Congress or BJP), the Congress must be held in greater part responsible for the slow killing of physical India. In fact, there have never been as many harmful projects to ecology as lately. Did you know for instance that the Asian Development Bank is funding a four-lane highway between Calcutta and Kanyakumari, called the "East Coast Road", which will create havoc with India's coast line? Already thousands of trees have been cut on the Mahabalipuram-Pondichery stretch; fields have been bulldozed; houses have been destroyed; entire villages sometimes are to be expropriated. How could the Central Government approve of a road so harmful to India's interests? The committee for saving the East

Coast, wrote letters to the Environment Ministry, sent telexes, faxes, spoke to the secretaries, but the Minister of Environment never received the people who wanted to preserve India's environment...So let's face it: in 30 years, we will all die of suffocation, or we will put a bullet in our heads because India will not be any more the place where we can live. Fortunately, there is a growing ecological awareness in India, and movements led by Medha Patkar, Shri Baghuna, or the lawyer Mehta, who are doing wonderful work. But they often stand alone, because as long as the people of India will not be educated, their work is doom.

But ultimately, is it fair to blame the Congress, or even the British (who nevertheless started the massive deforestation for their railways and killed hundreds of thousands of tigers)? Is there not something else in the Indian psyche that is to blame? Where is the root of this massive unconcern for one's environment; this total disregard for beauty, whether it is the terrible ugliness of the cities in Punjab, or the appalling filthiness in Tamil Nadu ?... And, maybe, for once, the Hindus are to blame. The Ganges seems to be the perfect illustration of a religion which enjoins a thousand purification rites and yet has allowed her own Mother earth to be defiled. Here is a river that Hindus have held most sacred for centuries, nay millenniums; to bathe in it is to purify oneself of all bad karma; to die here is to be reborn in Light. Yet what do all Hindus do with their sacred Ganges? They defecate in it; they throw in all their refuse; they let their dead float down the mighty river, AS IF THEY THOUGHT THAT THE

SPIRITUAL PURITY OF THE WATER CAN NEVER BE OBLITERATED BY MATERIAL DIRTINESS.

Why this contradiction? Why this immense paradox which may be indeed at the root of India's sure slide towards ecological catastrophe? Not the politicians, nor the British, but an apparent flaw in the Hindus' mentality? Sri Aurobindo believed that at some time in their history, the absolute, intense aspiration of the Hindus for the beyond, their eternal quest of God, got so one-sided, that they started neglecting Matter. India's sages began thus withdrawing more and more in their lofty caves in the Himalayas, her yogis slowly lost track of the physical envelope, this earthly body, which after all holds the soul and is the sacred house where we live and has to be kept clean and healthy - and neglected this earth, which gave us so much beauty and hence has to be preserved and protected as the symbol of gratitude from our soul... ...And gradually, an immense inertia, a terrible indifference, a great tamas overtook India. It is this great Tamas, this tremendous spiritual negligence for the Material, that allowed successive hordes of Muslims to sweep over India. It is this disinterest to the worldly that permitted the British to submit her for two centuries. It is this apathy to the physical, that tolerates today India's rape and plunder by those politicians, who are messing up Her future and jeopardising Her very existence. But Sri Aurobindo also tells us that it was not always so. the Rishis of the Vedas cared both about the worldly and the other-worldly. They has been farther than any seer in ancient history, yet catered to the material:: "O son

of the body, O Fire, thou art the Son of heaven by the body of the Earth (Rig-Veda III.25.1.). Thus once, India was a land of beauty and abundance; its inhabitants had respect for its trees, its animals, its water, because they believed that everything was God. Her forefathers had devised spiritual guidelines for all aspects of life, from the highest to the lowest: the great art of Hata-yoga which has come down to us throughout the ages, or the ancient medicine of Ayurveda, are symbols of that ancient all-encompassing divinity in life.

But this India of old is not dead. Sri Aurobindo asserted that India's dharma is still alive and that a great spiritual Renaissance is bound to take place. When, this renaissance materialises, when Indians wake-up and open their eyes to their great destiny, when the Spirit of the land of Bharat will look again at Matter, then will India's environment be redeemed, as if by magic. For the circle will have been completed and the Great Seers' prophecy will have come through: " "He is the child of the waters, the child of the forests, the child of things that move. Even in the stone he is there (Rig-Veda I.70.2).

So much has been said against Indian bureaucracy, that there is nothing much new to utter. Bureaucrats stifle India, nothing is done without these small babus who sit in their dingy little office with their lunch tiffins, amidst a thousand dusty files. The hapless Indian cannot function without having to bribe these petty men, whether it is to obtain his driving licence, an import permit, or a telephone connection. Ultimately, it

is hoped that the era of liberalisation and computerisation will bring an end to their reign, or at least curtail it. But is it sure? A babu with a computer can be even more deadly !

** Auroville, the International city near Pondichery founded by the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1968, and where a 1000 people from 25 countries live together, has shown how fast the earth can be redeemed, even when the task looks hopeless. When the first settlers arrived, Auroville was a barren plateau of red earth, with no trees left, except a few palms and one or two banyans. Yet old temples still showed records of a once abundant land with forests and wildlife. But indiscriminate tree cutting and heavy monsoons, washed away all the good topsoil in the sea, creating huge canyons and the water table had gone extremely low. The early Aurovillians first stopped the rain water from washing into the sea by erecting earth bunds wherever they could. Thus the water table slowly went up again. Then, they proceeded to plant a million trees, protecting them with thorns from goats and cows, which are a mortal danger to India's ecology. When these trees started growing up, they shed their leaves, which with the help of rain water, started rotting on the ground, recreating in a few seasons a fertile topsoil. Today Auroville is a vast forest, animal life has come back, the canyons are slowly filling up, and villagers have so much firewood, that they do not cut trees any more. Yet these same villagers still keep on planting cashewnut crops, a harmful tree, which has to be sprayed many times with deadly pesticides and

whose only value is its international market price. Yet villagers still let rain water flow in the sea and use cheap compost, mixed with plastic bags, hospital refuse and other non-disposable trash. EDUCATION is the word; the Indian Government has got to educate its villagers on the value of the sacred land that is India. India is slowly killing its most precious possession, as no Muslim invader or European coloniser, ever managed to do. Without its land, India will be like a great soul without a body, unable to manifest itself.

* A word must be said about Aids, when talking about disasters. Aids seems to be the scourge of the 21st century, the great black plague of our era. Why the emergence of this sudden dreaded disease? Is it because man has gone against Nature in the last sixty years and Nature always has the last word? Is Aids the outcome of some secret genetic manipulation on monkeys for biological warfare purpose, which went wrong and spread in Africa before reaching Europe and the rest of the world ? Nobody will probably ever know the truth. World Health organisations are very fond of saying that by the year 2000, India will have the greatest reservoir of HIV contaminated cases -some even speak about 10 millions. But as every one knows, Aids spreads mainly through three: homosexuality, hypodermic syringes of drug addicts and. prostitutes. Yet homosexuality is not very common in India's villages, which comprise 80% of the population; one-sided homosexuality is a Western phenomenon and it is brought in India by westernised Indians. As for drug addiction, again it is not common in Indian villages,

except in the Eastern border States, of which incidentally many happen to be Christians. Remain the prostitutes who constitute the greatest threat of spreading the disease, particularly in big cities like Bombay. Then in turn, those men who have contacted it will bring it in the villages, when they have intercourse with their wives. Let us hope that once more India's Dharma will protect her from another threat, this one so insidious and deadly that it could create havoc among its youth. ** Drugs are another deadly menace on today's humanity. The West likes to point a finger at the drug producing countries, such as Colombia or Afghanistan. But these nations are only meeting the western demand. The problem has to be tackled at the source, that is amongst the millions of drug addicts in the US and Europe. These junkies are a product and a symbol of their own failing civilisation, which is solely to blame.

Chapter 14) : INDIA, Spiritual Leader of the World

Has Western civilisation reached the end of the road ? Each culture has its own uniqueness: the Greeks were great thinkers, the Indians unsurpassed spiritualists, the Egyptians superb occultists. The West's genius is undoubtedly materialism, its immense capacity to achieve material perfection and its great vitality. But materialism has its shortcomings and ultimately, because it blanked out spirituality, except in a superficial and ritual manner, it may bring in the decline of Western civilisation. The first signs of its weaknesses are already there for everyone to see: the collapse of communism, the erosion of capitalism with recession and unemployment and the raging wars in Yugoslavia and the ex-USSR republics; these wars are bound to spill-over in mainstream Europe, even if it is in an indirect manner by an influx of refugees. That the United States still survives as a superpower, should not deceive anybody: often the core is weakened, even if the giant stills carries on with a few steps before collapsing to the ground. History does not happen in a few years. Materialism is doomed.

"For my part, wrote Sri Aurobindo in 1910, I see failure written large over all the splendid and ostentatious achievements of Europe. Her costliest experiments, her greatest expenditure of intellectual and moral force have led to the swiftest exhaustion of creative activity, the complete bankruptcy of moral elevation and discouragement of man's once infinite hope...System, organisation, machinery, have attained

their perfection. Bondage has been carried to its highest expression, and from a passion to organising external liberty Europe is slaying her spiritual freedom. When the inner freedom is gone, the external liberty will follow it, and a social tyranny more terrible, more inquisitorial, and relentless than any that caste ever organised in India, will take its place. The process has already begun. The shell of external liberty remains, the core is already eaten away. Because he is still free to gratify his senses and enjoy himself, the European thinks himself free. He does not know what teeth are gnawing in to the heart of his liberty"! (India's Reb P. 75) The other reason for the failing civilisation of the West, is that it greatly misused the mastery it had achieved over technology and the material. Instead of putting this mastery to the service of truth, instead of turning it towards the spirit of evolution, it used it for domination and the satisfaction of the Western man's senses. What about Asia then ? In Japan, only codified, externalised forms of the past greatness of Shintoism and Zen Buddhism survive, although it must be said that Japan preserves in its women something of the old spirit. It is hoped that its success as the most powerful industrial nation today will not totally blank whatever remains of old inner genius of Japan (minus the cruelty). But look at China: communism has killed most forms of Buddhism and Confucianism, making of the Chinese one of the most materialistic nations in the world. And behold what the Chinese did to Tibet, eradicating a 2000 year old tradition of tantric Buddhism in a few decades. This is a karma which China will have to repay one day...

And what of India? During these twelve chapters, the reader has been taken through all the dangers, threats, aggressions, pitfalls, perils, mistakes, that the land of Bharata went through in the aftermath of the glorious Vedic epoch. From the disdaining of Matter and the physical by her yogis, which triggered the great Tamas; the stiffening of the caste system; the fossilisation of its society; and the first foreign incursion by Alexander. To the successive Muslim invasions, which would have wiped out any culture, any civilisation in 10 centuries of furious onslaughts. Yet India's spirituality survived, it was preserved by its people in their hearts, when their temples were destroyed, in their flesh when it was burnt, in their souls, when they were killed. And they were reborn again and again, to fight for the continuation of true Hinduism. India also survived the immense threat of European colonialism, which has annihilated the souls of so many countries, some more powerful than India. The British came, conquered... understood nothing... left nothing... and India's spirituality remained. It survived the cruel partition of its ancient land, tearing its limbs into Pakistan and Bangladesh; any other nation might never have recovered from such a maiming. It survived the road to socialism charted by Nehru, the stifling oppression of state bureaucracy and corruption. It survived the dangerous politics of non violence, which Mahatma Gandhi propounded for so long and which activated not only the division of India along Hindu-Muslim lines, but also sowed the seeds of inter-caste fighting. It survived the Mahatma's sterile policies of Charkha, Brahmacharya and Khadi. It

survived the Chinese onslaught in 1962. It survives today the Hindu-bashing of its westernised elite, which is all set to wipe out whatever is left of Hinduism, to replace it with prototypes that have already shown the world over their total failure. It is also hoped that it is going to survive economic liberalisation, the onslaught of modernity and the egotism of becoming a powerful nation. And finally that it will also survive the ecological holocaust that is taking place in this country. And if it survives all these dangers, as it survived other dangers for 7000 years, then India will enter the 21st century not only as a world power, industrially, socially and militarily, but also as the only nation in the world where true spirituality will still be alive.

For we have lost the truth. we have lost the great sense, the meaning of our evolution, the meaning of why so much suffering, why dying, why getting born, why this earth, who are we, what is the soul, what is reincarnation, where is the ultimate truth about the world, the universe... But India has kept this truth. India has preserved it through seven millennium of pitfalls, of genocides and attempts at killing her santanam dharma. And this will be India's gift to this planet during the next century: to restore to the world its true sense. to recharge humanity with the real meaning and spirit of life. India will become the spiritual leader of the world : "It is this religion that I am raising-up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the Rishis, saints, and Avatars, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising forth this nation to send forth

my word...When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Santana Dharma that shall rise, it is the Santana Dharma that shall be great. When it is said that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Santana Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the Dharma and by the Dharma that India exists". (India's Reb. p. 46 -Uttara speech)

Rise up, O India of the Vedic ages. Thou livest in the hearts of all thy people. Rise up O Westernised "secular" India, because thou art also the true India. Realise in your hearts the genius of the country which is yours. Stop comparing it to a civilisation, which is crumbling and cease equating it with parameters that are not hers. Wake up to the greatness of thy country. Not only the past greatness, which thou seekest to repossess in its music or in its temples, but the greatness that IS, there, waiting to be grasped again, waiting to be brought down concretely. Rise up O India, to the greatness that IS in you. Rise up O true India.

Ah, we are coming back again full circle to the wonder that WAS India, the India of the Vedas and the Upanishad, which our dear friend A.L. Basham criticised as being militant and politically disunited. But the truth was that they were united in their diversity, that it was much more democratic and allowed much more freeplay and freedom, individually and collectively, than the India of today allows. Let us again reread history, let us look at India, not through the Western prism, but with the ancient wisdom that She has bestowed upon us. For indeed, this is one of the most amazing

paradoxes of today's world: here you have a country, India, which rates today as one of the poorest on this planet, which is disregarded by most Western nations (and many of its own people), as irrelevant, backward, too bureaucratic - and lately, as a hotbed of Hindu fundamentalism. Yet, India holds the key to the world's future. For India is the only nation which still preserves in the darkness of Her Himalayan caves, on the luminous ghats of Benares, in the hearts of her countless yogis, or even in the minds of her ordinary folk, the key to the planetary evolution, its future and its hope. This knowledge which once roamed the shores of the world from Egypt to China, is today lost everywhere. Europe has now entered a turbulent Age; it will take a long time before it unites in spite of the near uniformity of its races and religions. The West, in its thirst for materialism, does not know anymore where it stands and has lost this precious knowledge, which India still holds, alone in the world.

The 21st century then, will be the era of the East; this is where the sun is going to rise again, after centuries of decadence and submission to Western colonialism; this is where the focus of the world is going to shift. And as when India used to shine and send forth Her Dharma all over the Orient: Japan, Thailand, China, Burma, or Cambodia and influence their civilisations and religions for centuries to come, once more She will emit Her light and radiate, Queen among nations: "India of the ages is not dead nor has She spoken Her last creative word; She lives and has still something to do for Herself and the human

peoples. And that which She must seek now to awake, is not an anglicised oriental people, docile pupil of the West and doomed to repeat the cycle of the Occident's success and failure, but still the ancient immemorial Shakti recovering Her deepest self, lifting Her head higher towards the supreme source of light and strength and turning to discover the complete meaning and vaster form of Her Dharma. (Sri Aurobindo)

But what will be that true India?

a) The True India Within

The political problems which India has faced since Independence are either intense regionalist cravings in her different states; or covert - and sometimes open separatisms. This is due to a too strong centralised and heavy-handed Government at the Centre, who not only wants to know everything, control everything, but whose bureaucracy is so pervasive, so omnipresent everywhere, that it stifles all attempts at trying something new, fresh, out of the old patterns. Today, nothing is decided without the Prime Minister, no major decision such as the naming of a Congress Chief Minister, is made except by him, the result of which is that everything comes to a standstill, because nobody dares to take any initiative and everyone always refers to one's immediate superior and so on till it reaches the top. The Prime Minister also often holds too many portfolios; and one wonders how he has time to rule the country. This old Congress policy of centralising everything in its hands has to go. One has to trust the Indian people, their courage and spirit of initiative. It

may be because of this constant heavy-hand since independence, that so many separatisms have sprung-up. Let Punjab manage its own affairs alone, it is truly the granary of this country and it deserves the right to utilise the funds it generates for the welfare of its own people. Let Tamil Nadu give a free rein to its Dravidian culture; why should Delhi decide that Hindi be the language spoken in Tamil Nadu? And the Congress' opportunistic alliances with regional parties in Tamil Nadu, once the DMK, next the ADMK, does not make sense; it just breeds small dictators who exploit the people's natural gentleness and their tendency to worship. Let Assam assert its own traditions, even if it looks like drifting away from India.

The key to India's oneness is DIVERSITY and the unifying element is found in its ancient Hindu culture - 'Indu'- culture which has influence so much all Indians, be they Hindu, Christians, or even Muslims, witness Bangladesh and Pakistan who have women heads of state. India's Dharma is not Hinduism, it is the knowledge preserved throughout the ages of a Higher plane than surface life, of states of being which superimpose our ordinary mind and lead like a pyramid, towards the highest Reality, Sat-Chit, Truth- Existence. In the words of Sri Aurobindo: "A wider spiritual culture must recognise that the Spirit is not only the highest and inmost thing, but all is manifestation and creation of the Spirit. Its aim must be not only to raise to inaccessible heights a few elect, but to draw all man and all life and the whole human being upward, to spiritual life and in the end to deify human nature".

(India's Rebirth). But you have to give breathing spaces to the vast mosaic which is India. Let Indian Muslims rule their own communities, as long as they recognise India's sovereignty and keep within the framework of the Constitution. Let the Christians worship in peace in their cathedrals, so long as they do not try to go on converting more Hindus. Once again let us listen to the wisdom of Sri Aurobindo: "India, shut into a separate existence by the Himalayas and the ocean, has always been the home of a peculiar people with characteristics of its own, with its own distinct civilisation, way of life, way of the spirit, a separate culture, arts, building of society. it has absorbed all that has entered into it, put upon all the Indian stamp, welded the most diverse elements into its fundamental unity. but it has also been throughout, a congeries of diverse people, lands, kingdoms and in earlier times republics also, diverse races, sub-nations, with a marked character of their own, developing different brands or forms of civilisation and culture...India's history throughout has been marked by a tendency, a constant effort to unite all this diversity of elements into a single political whole under a central imperial rule, so that India might be politically as well as culturally one... the ancient diversities of the country carried in them great advantages as well as drawbacks. by these differences the country was made the home of many living and pulsating centres of life, culture, a richly and brilliantly coloured diversity in unity; all was not drawn up into a few provincial capitals, or an imperial metropolis, other towns and regions remaining subordinated and indistinct or even culturally asleep. the whole nation lived with a full life

in its many parts and this increased enormously the creative energy of the whole. there is no possibility any longer that this diversity will endanger or diminish the unity of India. those vast spaces which kept her people from closeness and a full interplay have been abolished in their separating effect by the march of science and the swiftness of the means of communication. the idea of a federation and a complete machinery for its perfect working have been discovered and will be at full work. above all, the spirit of patriotic unity has been too firmly established in the people to be easily effaced or diminished and it would be more endangered by refusing to allow the natural play of life of the sub-nations than by satisfying their natural aspirations... India's national life will then be founded on her natural strength and the principle of unity in diversity which has always been normal to her and its fulfilment the fundamental course of her being and its very nature the many in one would place her on the sure foundation of her swabhava and swadharma...a union of states and regional people would again be the form of a united India" (India's reb. p. 240-241)

b) The True INDIA Without

But for this purpose, a new Constitution has to be rewritten. We have said it again and again through these chapters: India has blindly borrowed her Constitution and her democratic institutions from the West. Nehru did not bother to adapt them to India's own particular needs, to the immense diversity of her people, who have shown throughout the ages that they

are bound to India by something else, than mere petty nationalism. India's civilisation is at least 7000 years old and should have a Constitution framed after her own history. Not only that, but the whole democratic system of India has to be reshaped to suit that new, that true nation, which will manifest the wonder that IS India.

And what is true democracy for India, but the law of Dharma. It is this law that has to be revived, it is this law that must be the foundation of a true democratic India: "It has been said that democracy is based on the rights of man; it has been replied that it should rather take its stand on the duties of man; but both rights and duties are European ideas. Dharma is the Indian conception in which rights and duties lose the artificial antagonism created by a view of the world which makes selfishness the root of action and regain their deep and eternal unity. Dharma is the basis of democracy which Asia must recognise, for in this lies the distinction between the soul of Asia and the soul of Europe." (India's Reb p.37- March 16th 1908)

And the most wonderful thing is that, practically, we have in India the seed of a new form of democracy. One should begin with the old Panchayat system in the villages and then work up to the top. The Panchayat system and the guilds are more representative and they have a living contact with the people; they are part of the people's ideas. On the contrary, the parliamentary system with local bodies- the municipal councils- is not workable: these councils have no living

contacts with the people. " We had a spontaneous and a free growth of communities developing on their own lines...Each such communal form of life -the village, the town, etc., which formed the unit of national life, was left free in its own internal management. The central authority never interfered with it... because its function was not so much to legislate as to harmonise and see that everything was going all right... (India's Rebirth 172) The Judiciary would have to be revised also. It would be absurd to put back the Manu law into practice; but certainly the law of Dharma, of Truth, should be translated into a new Judicial system. Not to judge according to Western standards, its secular values, which have no relevance to India. " The work of the legislators attempted to take up the ordinary life of man and of the community and the life of human desire and aim and interest and ordered rule and custom and to interpret and formulate it in the same complete and decisive manner and at the same time to throw the whole in to an ordered relation to the ruling ideas of the national culture and frame and perpetuate a social system and perpetuate a social system intelligently fashioned so as to provide a basis, a structure, a gradation by which there could be a secure evolution of the life from the vita and mental, to the spiritual motive.. " (Found of Indian Culture p. 283)

There is another problem which India has faced since independence, which is that of a unified language. The Central Government has tried to impose Hindi upon the rest the country, which is typical of the arrogance of too centralised a power. Why should they seek to

impose on the whole of India a language which is spoken neither in the East, nor in the West, nor in the South ? But then, what could be the unifying language of India, bare English, which is spoken only by a tiny minority, as it has no roots here? The answer is here, so simple and luminous: "Sanskrit ought still to have a future as the language of the learned and it will not be a good day for India when the ancient tongues cease entirely to be written or spoken", admonishes Sri Aurobindo (India's Reb 113). Yes, Sanskrit! Sanskrit the Mother of all tongues, one of the richest languages in the world. A dead language, you say! Impossible to revive? But that's what they argued about Hebrew. And did not the Jewish people, when they got back their land in 1948, revive their "dead" language, so that it is spoken today by ALL Jewish people and has become alive again?... The same thing ought to be done with Sanskrit, but as Sri Aurobindo points out: "it must get rid of the curse of the heavy pedantic style contracted by it in its decline, with the lumbering impossible compounds and the overweight of hair-splitting erudition". Let the scholars begin now to revive and modernise the Sanskrit language, it would be a sure sign of the dawning of the Renaissance of India. In a few years it should be taught as the second language in schools throughout the country, with the regional language as the first and English as the third. Then will India again have its own unifying language.

Education of course has to be totally revamped. The kind of Westernised education which is standard in India, does have its place, because India wants to be

on par with the rest of the world, and Indian youth should be able to deal confidently with the West: do business, talk, and relate to a universal world culture. But nevertheless, the first thing that Indian children should be taught is the greatness of their own culture. They should learn to revere the Vedas, they should be taught the greatness of the Mahabharata and the Ramanayana; they should be told that in this country everything has been done, that it was an unsurpassed civilisation, when the West was still mumbling its first words, that Indian civilisation reached dizzying heights, which have been since unsurpassed. But overall they should be taught early that India's greatness is her spirituality her world-wide wisdom. INDIA'S NEW EDUCATION HAS TO BE SPIRITUALISED IT HAS TO BE AN INNER EDUCATION WHICH TEACHES TO LOOK AT THINGS FROM THE INNER PRISM, NOT THROUGH THE WESTERN ARTIFICIAL LOOKING GLASS. India's Dharma, her eternal quest for truth should be drilled in the child from an early age. And from this firm base, everything then can be taught -from the most modern forms of mathematics, to the latest technologies. "National education...may be described as the education which starting with the past and making full use of the present, builds up a great nation. Whoever wishes to cut of the nation from its past, is no friend of our national growth. Whoever fails to take advantage of the present, is losing us the battle of life. We must therefore save for India all that she has stored up of knowledge, character and noble thoughts in her immemorial past. We must acquire for her the best knowledge that Europe can give her and assimilate it to

her own peculiar type of national temperament. We must introduce the best methods of teaching humanity has developed, whether modern or ancient. And all these we must harmonise into a system which will be impregnated with the spirit of self-reliance, so as to build up men and not machines". (India's Reb 36)

It should also be made clear that Indian history will have to be rewritten. Certainly if not only the Jews, but also the whole world is constantly drilled into the history of the holocaust, so as to remember and not repeat the same mistakes, definitely Indian children should be taught about the rape of their country by successive Muslim invaders and the incredible harm done to India. They should know the truth about Aurangzeb, Babar and Mahmud of Ghazni, instead of the present semi-glorifying of the great Mughal culture and period. They should not be taught to hate of their fellow Muslims in India, but to only know them in their real historical perspective. The Independence story should be also rewritten and true nationalists given their right place. The Congress should be granted its just share of the movement, but not sanctified as it is now. All Marxist denigration of India should also be banned from the books. Indian students should be taught to look at the world through the Indian prism and see historical events, such as the rape of the Third World by Spanish conquistadors or the colonising and impoverishment of Africa, in their factual colours. Another symbol of the emergence of a new India will be the universal acceptance of Vande Mataram as the national anthem. In 1939, a disciple had said to Sri

Aurobindo that: "there are some people who object to the singing of Vande Mataram as a national song; Sri Aurobindo had replied: "in that case Hindus should give up their culture". But the disciple had continued: "the argument is that the song speaks of Hindu gods, like Durga and that it is offensive to Muslims". Said Sri Aurobindo: "but it is not a religious song, it is a national song and the Durga spoken of is India as the Mother. Why should not the Muslims accept it? In the Indian concept of nationality, the Hindu view should be naturally there. if it cannot find a place, the Hindus may as well be asked to give-up their culture. The Hindus don't object to "Allah-Ho-Akbar".

On a national level, there should be a revival of authentic Indian traditional forms of genius, such as ancient medical systems, like Ayurveda, or Siddha, instead of the total dependence on Western antibiotics and their terrible proliferation. Today, these alleopathic medecines are found even in India's remotest villages, making people dependant on harmful drugs which are expensive and only serve to enrich the big foreign multinationals. It takes a Deepak Chopra, an Indian doctor exiled in the United States, to remind the world that Ayurveda is one of the greatest medical systems ever devised; that 5000 years ago, when the rest of the planet lived in total medical ignorance, Indian doctors were already performing plastic surgery, knew that the origin of many diseases were psychosomatic, had found in Mother nature the cure for most of man's ailments and realised that the five natural elements have to be made balanced in the human body for a perfect

harmonious life. Not only that, but Indian doctors were also yogis. They perceived that beyond the human body was another divine reality, of which the soul was the vehicle on earth. Today, Western doctors (and many Indian ones) are totally ignorant of the different planes of consciousness which superimpose our terrestrial life. Hence these doctors and the psychiatrists of the West are, as Sri Aurobindo pointed out, " searching with a torch light in the dark caverns of man's Unconscious ".

India is also full of marvellous indigenous arts which are ignored by the officialdom, but actually are at the source of many of the world's wonders. Such is Kerala's kalaripayat, the most extraordinary martial art on this earth, not only because it is the ancestor of all great Asian martial arts, such as judo or karate, because it was taken by Buddhist monks and the famous Boddidharma (founder of Zen Buddhism) to China and Japan, but also because it is the only martial art in the world which regroups all kinds of fighting techniques under one umbrella: sword, knife, spears, bare handed techniques, flexible swords. It is also a great medical knowledge, its masters are yogis and practise a unique form of massage. Unfortunately it is dying because India ignores that she possesses such a wonderful art.

And what about Indian yogic sciences ? Pranayama for instance is the most exacting, precise, mathematical, powerful breathing discipline one can dream of. Its effects and results have been observed and categorised by Indian yogis for millenniums. This

extraordinary knowledge, brings in very quickly wonderful results in both the well being of the body and the quietude of the mind. Pushed to its extreme, it gives to the disciple deep spiritual experiences and a true inner perception of the world. And what about Hata-yoga, also a 5000 year old technique, which has inspired today all kind of aerobic, of so-called yoga techniques and gymnastic drills around the world ? Practised properly it brings health, strength and endurance to the body. It is the secret of Indian Yogis' incredible longevity. It may be too, a help to a once and future immortality. And like in Pranayama, its exercises, results and particularities are so well categorised that there is a solution for each problem of the human body, an application for each part of the human anatomy. And what about meditation, queen of all the yogic sciences ? That which is above everything, that without which any yogic discipline is impossible. That which interiorizes us, carries us within ourselves, to the discovery of our true soul and nature. There are hundreds of different mediation techniques, simple, cartesian, easy to experience, which have been devised by Indian sages since the dawn of Bharat. Each one has its own characteristics, each one gives particular results, which has been experienced by the billions of aspirants who have practised them since the dawn of Vedic times.

But are all these yogic sciences dead, disappeared from India, gone for ever from the earth consciousness ? Not at all. India is full of ashrams, of yogis, of masters, who are still keeping alive all those wonderful

sciences. From the tip of cape Comorin to Kashmir, you cannot go to a place in this country without finding some spiritual place, some sadhu practising a particular tapasaya, some course in meditation for householders. You have just to step out of the big cities, its five star hotels, its mad traffic, its hurried businessmen with their ties and briefcases and enter India's country side, and you step again in India's immortal Dharma, you can still feel the line of continuity of 7000 years of sages. This is the Wonder that IS India.

And what do you think would happen if these ancient arts still alive in India were officially recognised by the Indian Government, by Indian themselves and UTILISED in every day life. What do you think would happen for instance if pranayama was systematically taught to sportsmen from the beginning of their training ? It would produce supermen; it would be difficult to beat Indian athletes, because through this marvellous technique they would have achieved perfect concentration. What would happen if Indian businessmen used too Pranayama ? It would double their capacity of work and endow them with enthusiasm for their task. Or if school children were taught at a very early age the combined techniques of pranayama, hata-yoga, meditation and Ayurveda ? It would maybe produce the next human species of our era, a race which is spiritualised in both mind and body. Unfortunately, for the moment, not only the Indian government does not recognise the Wonder that Was India, but it constantly denigrates these great techniques which are part of India's heritage; the

Christian and Muslim minorities reject them outright as part of the Hindu culture. And also modern Indians, whether businessmen, intellectuals, or bureaucrats, disdain this golden treasure of India.

But fortunately for the planetary evolution, India's yogis, gurus, teachers are going all around the world to spread this wonderful knowledge. Some are genuine ones, some are semi-fakes, some are total fakes. But it does not matter, because almost all of them carry abroad the message of yoga. Among these messengers of truth, one could mention the remarkable Vipassana mediation technique of Shri Goenka, which has centres all around the world. Or the prayanama, courses of the Art Of Living of Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, which is fast spreading around the world. Or Krishna Iyengars' wonderful hata-yoga techniques. All these yogis are propagating India's eternal dharma around the world slowly but surely and thanks to them, there are more and more people in the West who are interested in Indian sciences (*), who practise pranayama, hata-yoga, or meditation. It maybe even that India will have to realise its Wonder when the West will point its finger at it, as happened in a lesser way in Japan with its martial art techniques, Zen Buddhism, rock gardens and Bonzai art, when America took hold of them. Let us hope though, that the true India will emerge soon.

For the India of tomorrow, the spiritual leader of the world, Mother India, Durga: " is not a piece of earth; she is a Power, a Godhead, for all nations have such a Devi supporting this separate existence and

keeping it in being..." (Sri Aurobindo, India's Rebirth, p. 235) "Mother Durga ! Rider on the lion, giver of all strength, we are seated in thy temple. Listen, O Mother, descend upon earth, make thyself manifest in this land of India"...

(*) The West often labels as " sects ", whatever spiritual movements they cannot understand and which do not belong to the family of Christianity. This hostility to everything which has a Hindu flavour, stems both from an ignorance of what exists beyond the small reality of their own culture and religion and from an unconscious asuric antagonism to what they dimly perceive as a threat to their secure, walled-up world of certitudes. The best example of this phenomenon is the assault on Rajneesh by the West, (which was also unfortunately taken-up by Indian intellectuals and " secularists "), a man who, whichever were his faults and the excesses of his followers, was an exceptional human being. Europe always treats Indian spiritual movements such as Hare Krishna, (again whatever its excesses and negative sides) or the Transcendental Meditation of Shri Maharishi, as sectarian, non-Cartesian movements. But India should receive no lessons in cartesianism from a people who believe that Christ was born of a virgin, that he was resurrected from the dead and then ascended to heaven...

Chapter 15) : INDIA Outside : True Federalism

Pakistan today appears (*) to be the first dilemma which is always confronting India outside. The major challenge she is facing at her borders stems mainly from Pakistan, constantly repeat Indian leaders. Pakistan's hand appears to be everywhere: in Kashmir, of course, although they denied it for years; but also Punjab; in the separatist movements in the East, as in Assam; in Bangladesh today; or in Bombay, where the bombings were Pakistan's answer to what they perceived as an outrage on Islam. And even if Pakistan's hand is not there, Indian political leaders always find the shadow of their enemy.

Pakistan seems also sometimes to be winning the propaganda battle which projects India as an oppressor, a nation which tramples on Human Rights, whether in Kashmir or Punjab. But the greatest shadow over South Asia is the threat of a nuclear holocaust, which would probably be started by Pakistan, as they know they cannot beat India in a conventional war. And this, it is hoped will remind us of Sri Aurobindo's warning in 1947, which we quote again, because of its total relevance today: "India is free, but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom...The whole communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into a figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the Nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled, or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may

be seriously weakened, even crippled; civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. The partition of the country must go...For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and frustrated. That must not be." (Message of Sri Aurobindo on the 15th of August 1947).

And if you look closely at India's woes since 1947, many of them seem to have sprung from that partition, from the shame of that division, from the cowardly assent to the terrible maiming of Mother India, which most Indian political leaders have accepted as a permanent 'fait accompli'. But, are not Pakistan and India part of the same soul? Are not Pakistanis and Indians of the same colour, culture, ethnic stock? Have they not the same food habits, the same customs in many ways? In truth, you cannot really differentiate one Punjabi from the other Punjabi, or one Sindhi from the other Sindhi, except for his religion. So what if they worship two different Gods, which are but two names for the same Infinite Reality... This is what marks out 120 million Muslims from their 500 million Hindu brothers; yet they have to learn to live together and they WILL cohabit together in the future. Why should Indian and Pakistan, two developing countries, go on spending billions and billions of dollars on getting ready to fight each other, killing each other, they the brothers that lived together through seven millenniums of one of the greatest civilisations of this earth? For are not Pakistanis as much as Indians part of the same 'Indu' soil, which was the land of Bharat, before the Muslims

came and forcibly converted so many- who today call themselves Pakistanis, or Indian Muslims?

All right, you cannot change history. Pakistan has evolved its own identity and it stands on his own as a nation, with its particular ethos. YET IT SHOULD BECOME CLEAR TO ALL, THAT NOT ONLY THE ONLY LASTING SOLUTION TO PEACE IN THE SUBCONTINENT, THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID A NUCLEAR CONFLICT IN SOUTH ASIA, WHICH COULD EVEN DRAG THE WORLD IN ITS HORROR, IS THE REUNION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN. BUT ALSO, EVEN MORE, THAT THE ONLY WAY INDIA IS GOING TO REGAIN HER GREATNESS THAT WAS, THE ONLY MANNER SHE CAN ENTER THE 21ST CENTURY AS THE LAND OF DHARMA, AS THE SPIRITUAL LEADER OF THE WORLD, IS FOR HER AND PAKISTAN TO REUNITE.

The question is: how? It certainly cannot be done in a day and it cannot be accomplished in a hurried and artificial manner. First there has to be an understanding among both the people, an acceptance of that possibility, which up to now has not even been thought off seriously. Once the idea has started to work among people, the process may begin - at the heart of the matter, where things are most difficult between India and Pakistan: in Kashmir, for instance. For Kashmir represents the perfect impossibility, the absolute dead-end, and symbolises the irrevocable enmity between Pakistan and India. India will not surrender Kashmir, because she considers rightly that it has been part of her territory for 5000 years. Pakistan will not surrender

its claim on the Valley, because it estimates rightly that the Kashmir vale is 95% Muslim and that under the (mad) logic of partition, it should have reverted to Islamabad. And both countries are trying by force, the one openly, the other covertly, to stake their claims on Kashmir. Thus, there is no issue, except war, a nuclear conflict maybe - and everyone will be the loser: who will have Kashmir then if there is nothing left of India and Pakistan?

If the absurdity of the whole Kashmir business is seen in that light, then India and Pakistan might agree to sit down and hammer out, not an idiotic splitting in two of Kashmir, as they have already done of India, which will solve nothing and only postpone a later confrontation, but a just reunion. LET BOTH INDIA AND PAKISTAN ADMINISTER KASHMIR, (*) . which would retain its identity and culture as a member of a greater India confederation. It can start in a gradual way by military observers of both the countries being posted to watch over the peace process. Eventually it can lead to a joint government of Kashmir. Then there could be a tentative reunification of both the Kashmirs, which would be a prelude to an eventual reunification of India and Pakistan in a loose confederation of which the Kashmir joint experiment would be the model and the guinea pig, because we have no illusion that this will be an easy process.

There can be no peace in the subcontinent until India and Pakistan are reunited. For they are part of the same soul, the same body, even if it has different

names and boasts of two religions diametrically opposed to each other, Hinduism and Islam, the latter thrown into India by the twist of fate and invasions. But as long as the two countries do not understand the urgency of reunification, there will be wars, a nuclear war maybe, and Ayodhyas and bomb blasts, and separatist movements in both India and Pakistan, fuelled by each other, and bloated military budgets heavily taxing the economy. But the beautiful thing is that Kashmir, although it looks like the perfect dead-end, is there to show the way to the Light.

But the reunification of India and Pakistan will be only the first step, because ultimately the goal is the reunification of ALL that was once the Greater India and which is today only small fragmented countries with no real soul, no direction, no sense. Bangladesh is the exemplary instance of that meaninglessness. Here is a country full of marvellous people, with immense possibilities at all levels, but which on its own, has very little resources, except jute. A country which is constantly invaded by floods, which is at the mercy of dictators, or semi-dictators, like Ershad, who embarked upon an islamization programs which has harmed the spontaneous tendencies of the Bengalis. A nation which is near totally dependant on Foreign Aid agencies, with their luxurious houses, their Japanese 4 wheel drive cars, and their money, which ultimately does not solve much, as each natural catastrophe repeats the same story of helplessness. The same can be said for Sri Lanka, a nation, as we have seen earlier, which has shown little foresight since independence, whose Tamil-

Sinhalese feud cannot be resolved by reason, for it is the consequence of an old hatred and centuries of Sinhalese discrimination against the Tamil minority. A nation which produces hardly anything, is dependant on tea and tourism and yet is full of infinite possibilities, with its vast mosaique of people, races, religions, its natural beauty and ideal climate. And what of Nepal, one of the poorest countries of the world, with its rapidly depleting forest cover. Nepal is the only Hindu kingdom of the world and should have then naturally a harmonious fruitful relation with India -which is not the case at all, as the king and the communists, have always played the Chinese card against India. Nepal should have nothing to fear from India, as the two countries have so much in common.

If Europe has done it, why not the South Asian countries ? For the ultimate solution to all the problems in South Asia, whether an Indo-Pakistan nuclear conflict, or the Chakma problem, or the Tamil separatist dilemma, is FEDERALISM, a united common Government, under whichever form, which will allow each South Asian country to retain its own individuality, to practice in peace its own religion, to manage even its own affairs, but under the political umbrella of a benevolent, spiritualized, non-violent, but nevertheless powerful India, which will protect them, solve their problems and help them. Not the Soviet type of United Republics, whose totalitarianism showed its ultimate failure, but a spiritualized federalism which would be on the lines of ancient India, when all the republics were allowed free play, while recognising the same unifying

principle of Dharma. This Federal union of states would comprise India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Burma, Nepal, the Maldives.

What we see today in the reunification of the two Germanys, of the two Vietnams, of the two Koreas eventually, is a sign of an evolutionary trend which is trying to manifest itself at present. "...The unification of the human world is under way; there is an imperfect initiation organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and it must inevitably increase and conquer. HERE TOO INDIA HAS BEGUN TO PLAY A PROMINENT PART AND IF SHE CAN DEVELOP THAT LARGER STATESMANSHIP WHICH IS NOT LIMITED BY THE PRESENT FACTS AND IMMEDIATE POSSIBILITIES, BUT LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE AND BRINGS IT NEARER, HER PRESENCE MAY MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SLOW AND TIMID AND A BOLD AND SWIFT DEVELOPMENT. A catastrophe may intervene and interrupt or destroy what is being done, but even then the final result is sure. For unification is a necessity of Nature, an inevitable movement. Its necessity for the nations is also clear, for without it the freedom of the nations may be at any moment in peril and the life even of the large and powerful nations insecure. The unification is therefore to the interest of all and only human imbecility and stupid selfishness can prevent it; but these cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will... Sri Aurobindo's message on Independence 15.8.47 The partition of India must go and the Greater India, the land of the 'Indus', Bharat, be born again

Chapter 16) : "THE FINAL DREAM"

"The final dream was a step in evolution which would raise man to a higher and larger consciousness and begin the solutions of the problems which have perplexed and vexed him since he first began to think and dream of individual perfection and a perfect society... The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must proceed through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, THE INITIATIVE CAN COME FROM INDIA and, although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers." (Sri Aurobindo's message on 15.8.47)

What is that 'final dream' of which Sri Aurobindo talked about and in which he saw a preponderant part of India, the India of the last chapter, a true India, organized into a federation of free states with a central enlightened Government, a unified language and policy; a leader of the world in ideas and wisdom, which again would manifest the Santanam Dharma, Bharat born again.

Man is the visible result of a long evolutionary process of which apes, were the previous link: "The appearance of a human possibility in a material and animal world was the first glint of some coming divine Light, the first far-off promise of a godhead to be born out of Matter", writes Sri Aurobindo in the Hour of God.

And monkeys themselves, must have been the offspring of another species - and so on, back to the first Big Bang. In the same way, Sri Aurobindo believed that man was not the last link in human evolution and that there would be ANOTHER rung in the ladder towards Divine Perfection: "Man is a transitional being; he is not final. For in man and high beyond him ascend the radiant degrees that climb to a divine supermanhood. There lies our destiny and the liberating key to our aspiring but troubled and limited mundane existence." (The Hour of God, p. 61) Sri Aurobindo went on to explain that what he meant by man, "was the mind imprisoned in the body", and he emphasized that mind was not the highest possible form of consciousness, because mind is incapable of attaining truth; he is only at best "an ignorant seeker of truth". Beyond mind, he continued, is a "supramental or gnostic power of consciousness", which is in eternal possession of truth. Supermanhood is the next approaching achievement in earth's evolution and "it is inevitable because it is in the logic of Nature's process". But warned Sri Aurobindo: "Supermanhood is not man climbed to his own natural zenith, not a superior degree of human greatness, knowledge, power, intelligence, will, character, genius, dynamic force, saintliness, love, purity, or perfection. Supermind is something beyond mental man and his limits; it is a greater consciousness than the highest consciousness proper to human nature". (Hour of God 62)

Today the Western world utterly shows the limits of mind carried to its extreme. Idealisms were the highest

goals of Europe. And they were all tried: communism, socialism, liberalism, conservatism, socratism, materialism, pragmatism, atheism, existentialism...you name it... But they have all proved failures. In their name, man tried everything to control man: laws, rules, taxes, penalties, interdictions, bureaucratic hurdles. Or some gave him licence to indulge in his instincts, to go to the limits of his vital and sensual appetites. But nobody was able to bridle man. Nevertheless, it can be said that the greatest achievement of the West is that it has succeeded in a certain control over the physical, the material; and each day brings new discoveries, whether in science, medicine, technology, or that most marvelous of sciences, the computers, which come nearest to the intricacies of man's brain. But for what purpose? Man is more and more unhappy, as he is getting cut off from his divine reality; the two cars, cable TV, satellite phone and instant computerization, are not taking him nearer to his soul. As Sri Aurobindo emphasizes: "Mind is the highest form in man. But mind is an ignorant, clouded and struggling power. And even when most luminous it is possessed only of a thin, reflected and pallid light... Man is himself little more that an ambitious nothing. He is a littleness that reaches to a wideness and a grandeur that are beyond him, a dwarf enamored of the heights. His mind is a dark ray in the splendors of the Universal Mind. His life is a striving, exulting, suffering and eager passion-tossed and sorrow-stricken, or a blindly and dumbly longing petty moment of he Universal Life. His body is a labouring perishable speck in the material universe". (Hour of

God.63) Can this be the end of evolutionary nature, this frail body and bumbling mind? Is this why the universe started billion of years ago, right from the big Bang where nothing was, to the first forms of life in the protoplasms? From the crawling, to the flying, and the standing? From the millions of apes who tried thinking, before one of them had the first crude idea in his mind and fashioned a stone into a weapon - to today's Discoverer spacecrafts and supercomputers?

But in truth, man is indeed special: "An immortal soul is somewhere within him and gives out some sparks of its presence...Man's greatness is not in what he is, but in what he makes possible. His glory is that he is the closed place and the secret workshop of a living labour in which supermanhood is being made ready by a divine craftsman. But his conscious assent, his consecrated will and participation are needed that into his body may descend the glory that will replace him." (Hour of God, p.63) This is why we get those "soul moments" in our lives, when suddenly everything seems possible, when for a few seconds, we become All Harmony, All Joy. "Above, an eternal spirit overshadows him and upholds the soul continuity of his nature". This is the divine presence in us, above us, around us, the all pervading immanence of the Infinite. That to which man has always aspired throughout his History, that which he instinctively feels in himself, although the primitive man came closer to Nature and his heart may have been more receptive than the modern homo sapiens of today, immersed in the ego of his achievements. And this is the endless cycle of our

human evolution: we are born, our soul grows from each life, drawing from each experiences it needs for its evolution -and then we die... and the soul is reborn again after some time and so son, and so on.

Mind was the greatest achievement of man when he took over from the animal, but today mind has become the OBSTACLE, the impediment to the next evolutionary change, because Mind thinks it is the ultimate realization in the world, not realizing that "it is only a clumsy interlude between Nature's vast and precise subconscient action, and the vaster infallible superconscient action of the Godhead." What is the step for receiving that next possibility? What is the best attitude for feeling the Godhead at work? "There is nothing mind can do that cannot be better done in the mind's immobility and thought-free stillness. When mind is still, then Truth gets a chance to be heard in the purity of the silence... For Truth cannot be attained by the mind's thought, but only by identity and silent vision. Truth lives in the calm, wordless Light of the eternal spaces; she does not intervene in the noise and cackle of logical debate"... (Sri Aurobindo, the Hour of God) Good-bye O ye lofty philosophers, great thinkers and wise sociologists, ye who think that you can dissect the world and predict its future, ye who today still propound obscure, superficial and negative theories on the future of humanity. Hello our Indian yogis and sages, ye, who dwell in your caves, in your ashrams or in the quiet silence of your hearts! Hello you million of fellow meditators, who each day give a little of your time to the quietness of your mind, you are all

participating in the elaboration of the next world. "O thou seeker of Truth, and traveller on the roads to the next step of humanity's relentless march to evolution and perfection: Be free in thyself and therefore free in thy mind, free in thy life and thy body, for the Spirit is freedom. Be one with God and all beings; live in thyself and not thy little ego. For the Spirit is Unity. Be thyself immortal, and put not thy faith in death; for death is not of thyself, but of thy body. For the spirit is immortality. To be immortal is to be infinite in being and consciousness and bliss; for the spirit is infinite and that which is finite lives only by this infinity.." (Hour of God page 9)

"Be thyself immortal and put not thy faith in death"... DEATH, this is the fateful word. For what are all our human achievements, our loves, as lofty they can be, our creations, our hopes, our realizations, when death annihilates everything, when oblivion puts back the clock once more. And again we have to be reborn to start all over, to learn all over again what took us a life of patience to master. Is death the ultimate goal then? Is death the only end to our struggle and our endeavors?. No says Sri Aurobindo: "The Supramental is nothing less than the descent of the Supreme Truth and Power INTO MATTER, THE SUPRAMENTAL ESTABLISHED IN THE MATERIAL PLANE AND CONSCIOUSNESS AND THE MATERIAL WORLD AND AN INTEGRAL TRANSFORMATION DOWN TO THE VERY PRINCIPLE OF MATTER.

This is what makes Sri Aurobindo's yoga different from other yogas and that is why he called it "integral yoga": not only the transformation of the mind and the vital, but also of the physical, the ultimate descent of what he called "the supermind", the next step in evolution, what is above mind, as mind was above the inanimate, into the most material planes of our existence, OUR BODY. And this immortality, is not a fancy resurrection or a miraculous glorified body in which we can live for ever our desires and fixations, but a body where truth descends and which is transformed into truth, for the ultimate truth in the ultimate material IS immortality. This is an uncharted path, this is the next step in our evolution: this descent of the supermind in our body. Sri Aurobindo had started the work and spoke at length of "the golden light that was invading his body". When he passed away on the 5th December 1950, his spiritual companion of 35 years, whom he called the Mother and about whom He said: "The one whom we adore as the Mother is the Divine Conscious Force that dominates all existence, one and yet so many-sided that to follow her movement is impossible, even for the quickest mind and for the freest and most vast intelligence. The Mother is the consciousness and force of the Supreme and far above all she creates". (The Mother 26,27)

She is the universal Mother, Mother India, whom since Vedic times, Indians have worshiped under all her mighty forms: Durga, Kali, Parvati, Sita, Laxmi, Mahasaraswati, Maheswari. "O Mother of radiances, you have dawned in the narrow horizons of my mind. Out of

the depthless rigidities, in the midst of the walled-up spaces you have created a heart-like something that will live its eternal life. You have revealed to me a chamber alive and warm within the mind's substance-less polar regions and there I can safely retire and find in you my refuge" (Hour of God, p 5).

The Mother, Mira Alfassa, was born in Paris on the 21st February 1878. Already as a little girl, she had strong mystical experiences, dreaming at night of covering the whole of Paris with her long mantle of love and compassion, relieving the pains, the sufferings and the agonies of its men and women. Mathematician, painter and a remarkable pianist, she befriended many of the great artists of her time, Gustave Moreau, Rodin, or Monet. It is in 1914 that She arrives for the first time in Pondichery, where Sri Aurobindo had already started his intensive yoga with more and more disciples gathering around him, Sri Aurobindo whom she had seen in a dream, 10 years before meeting him. She will live 30 years with Sri Aurobindo, sharing his experiences, communicating hers and gradually taking over the daily running of the Ashram, which under her guidance, became an ashram like no other ashram, where work was "the prayer of the body to the Divine", and where physical education held a very important place for young and old alike, because as Sri Aurobindo had said: "The perfection of the body, as great a perfection as we can bring about by the means at our disposal, must be the ultimate aim of physical culture...for the body is the material basis, the body is the instrument which we have to use. 'Sariram khalu

dharma sadhanam', says the old Sanskrit adage, -the body is the means of fulfillment of dharma". (Supramental Manifestation of man, page 5)

At long last, we are coming back full circle to the Vedic seers who had gone down deep in the cavern of the body and had cried: "He discovered the Truth, the ultimate Sun who dwells in the deepest obscurity" (Rig Veda, III.39.5) But India lost the secret, its yogis and sages drifted farther and farther away from the material, away from the body, which houses the soul of light and withdrew in their ashrams, their caves, their mountains, to dwell on the Infinite. The body was laid to waste, India opened herself to infinite tamas, to the raping of her soil by numerous barbarians and to the neglecting of beauty. Then also came Buddhism, with its nefarious emphasis on escaping from the pain, illusion and misery of this world, into marvellous Nirvana. And Nirvana is indeed marvelous, and Gautama the Bouddha was indeed a great soul, but then what? Is all that suffering from these billion of years, of death and oblivion, just to go back to Nirvana? We might never have left all that wonderful bliss... And the eternal question of WHY DEATH has haunted us and still haunts us.

When Sri Aurobindo left his body in 1950, having chartered the way for the descent of the supramental truth, the Mother took up what she called the "Yoga of the cells", to transform each cell of Her body, so that it accepts the supreme truth. And she said: " There is always the possibility to escape 'elsewhere'. Many have

done that: they went into another world, more subtle, there are a million ways to run away like that. But there is only one way to stay here, that is to have the courage, the endurance, to accept all appearances of infirmity, the appearance of misunderstanding. But if one does not accept that, then nothing will ever be changed". And she went hunting for that "Secret": "One has the impression sometimes that there is an extraordinary secret to discover and that it is there at your fingertips. Sometime even for a split second, one sees the secret, there is an opening and then everything closes-up again. But again, for a second, the veil lifts and one knows a little more.. I have seen the Secret, I have seen that it is in the terrestrial Matter, on this earth that the Supreme becomes perfect (Mother's Agenda 25.9.65)

What is this secret? What path did the Mother chart for 23 years? This secret has been carefully noted down step by step by Satprem, a French disciple of the Mother who was her confidant for all these years. Satprem called these notations "the Mother's Agenda", 13 volumes where page after page, the Mother narrates meticulously all that goes through her body, day after day. "There is a consciousness of the body which floats in there like an eternal peace, but it is not like a still immensity, it is a movement which has not limits and which has a very harmonious rhythm and very tranquil and very vast and calm. And it is this movement which is life...ever silent like the movements of waves, which has neither beginning nor end". And later she cries: "Death is an illusion, illness is an illusion, ignorance is

an illusion! it has no reality, no existence...Only Love and Love and Love-immense, prodigious, and the thing is DONE". Comments Satprem in his beautiful book "the Mind of the Cells": "the passage to next species is done. When the first bird flew among the reptiles, it was the sure sign that others will inevitably follow and fly too. And the capital point is that death and illness disappear materially in this other state, which is the Mother's experience; it is an experience of the body, of the cells, and not the nirvanic experience of the mystical summits. It is not the illusion of the world as mystics preached, it is the illusion of our physical perception of the world and of the lie which springs out of that perception: death and illness. If the cellular perception changes, sickness and death vanish in 'something else', which the Mother was going to discover gradually."

Satprem was born in 1923 in Paris. He spent his childhood in Bretagne, where his love for the sea and sailing was his only escape from an otherwise bleak world where he felt imprisoned in the rigid frames of the Western mould. When he was 20, he enrolled in the French resistance to fight against the German occupation army, was arrested by the dreaded Gestapo and taken to the terrible Buchenwald concentration camp, where so many Jews Gypsies, communists and resistants like him, were murdered by the Nazis in the gas chambers. Satprem survived, but this experience would forever shape his burning desire to go beyond the appearances. As he recalls: "I found myself there naked, vandalized, as in the Beginning of Times or may

be at the End". After the war, Satprem, in a rage of confronting life, wanders around the world: "Just out of Hell, I took life on my knees and I told her: now you are going to tell me your secret, not of the books, but the secret that beats in my naked heart."(Mind of cells II) After many adventures, he lands up in Pondichery, as deputy to the last French Governor, François Baron. There he meets the Mother and Sri Aurobindo, and the experience of the one about whom he says was "immobile as the Himalayas", will last him all his life. He goes again wandering around the world; but his heart is really with the Mother and Sri Aurobindo. And in 1954 he comes back for good to Pondichery and becomes the Mother's confidant, jotting down Her Agenda.

On the 17th November 1973, the Mother after having explored the cellular consciousness of her own body, departs. Was the earth not ready? She was struggling to be understood even by some of her own close disciples. Did she complete her work and then depart ? Who has the vision to say...But the way was traced and had not Sri Aurobindo decreed: "the Supramental manifestation is inevitable..." The path is however still long and Satprem, her confidant, took up the work, withdrew from all activity and in the secret of some Himalayan retreat, went on, alone, exploring the the yoga of the cells. And maybe are there others individuals like him, who quietly, anonymously, somewhere in this earth, are working on their own bodies towards the materialisation of the next species of our human evolution.

Globally, it is India which holds the key to the destiny of the world; it is India which can show the way of supramentalization of man and society. India of whom the Mother said: " India must be saved for the good of the world since India alone can lead the world to peace and a new world order" (India and her destiny page 5). Through these 16 chapters, we have harped constantly on the fact that the Greatness that WAS India is not something of the past, that India's Santanam Dharma, Her boundless reserves of spirituality are intact, ready to manifest themselves again. India has to wake-up to Her destiny, recoup her spiritualized outlook, stop looking at Herself and at the World through the Western prism of understanding, which is an artificial view, out of touch with the inner reality and which has been imposed to India by its colonizers for three centuries.

For this purpose, India must first unite from within, allow its own States, which represent the vast mosaic of her diversity, their freedom of expression, under a federalized setup, whatever its structure. the South Asian countries should also regroup under India's leadership in another system of confederation, which would leave them too the freedom to express their religion and culture in the creative bosom of India's Santanam Dharma. This South Asian block would become a major world power and could compete with China and the European Common Market. Then only, can India send Her light shining forth and show the way to the earth towards a return towards true spirituality. Then only can India tell the world : "look this is how

things happen; this is the way of the soul, this is the history of evolution, this is our next step in our march towards a divine Reality. Thus India will not only become the land of Bharat again, the cradle of Indu civilization, but the great Vedic sages' prediction will also have been fulfilled: "Our fathers by their words broke the strong and stubborn places... shattered the great mountain rock with their cry; they made in us a path to the great Heaven, they discovered the Day and the Sun-World... They found the treasure of Heaven hidden in the secret cavern...The well of honey covered by the rock".. (Rig-Veda I.71.2-1.130.3-II.24.4) and India will lead the world onto the way to supramentalization, man after man, that which is above mind. LONG LIVE THE WONDER THAT IS INDIA.

FRANCOIS GAUTIER AUROVILLE 24.4.94 - REVISED 24/4/95 - 9/9/95 - 5/5/97

P.S. India is a land of such diversity, paradoxes, contradictions, that no mind can purport to understand her fully. Ultimately, all attempts, such as this book, are only a mental rendering of an intuitive perception of India's true soul, however partial, clumsy, distorted, or maybe erring, this attempt may be. I thus apologize to the reader if he feels I have overstepped my boundaries.

THE WONDER THAT IS INDIA

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Francois Gautier, born in Paris in 1950, is a French journalist and writer, who is the political correspondent in India and South Asia for "Le Figaro", France's largest circulation newspaper. He is married to an Indian and has lived in India for the past 29 years, which has helped him to see through the usual cliches and prejudices on India, (to which he subscribed for a long time), as most foreign (and sometimes, unfortunately, Indian) journalists, writers and historians do. He shuttles between Delhi and the international city of Auroville near Pondichery.

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